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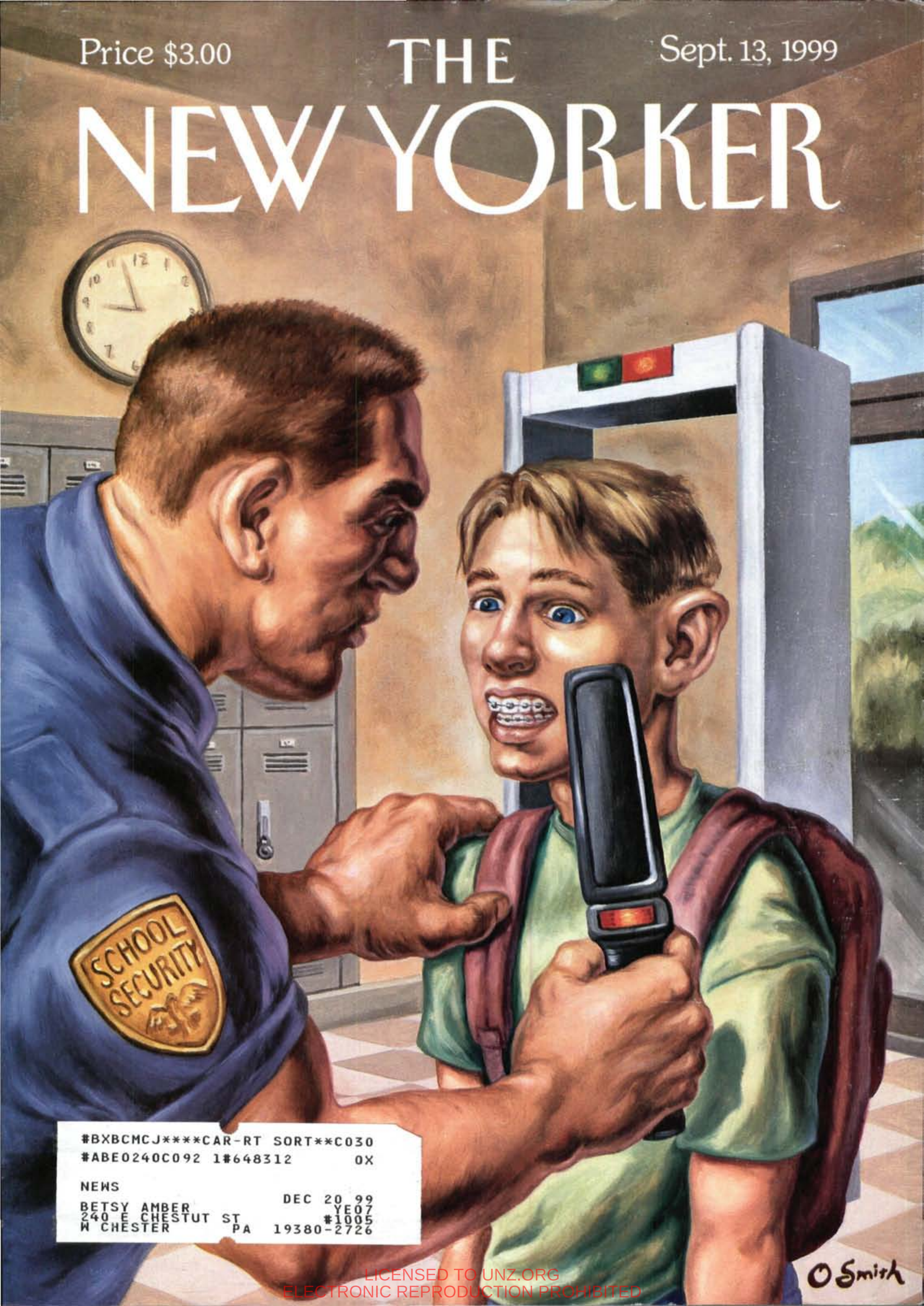
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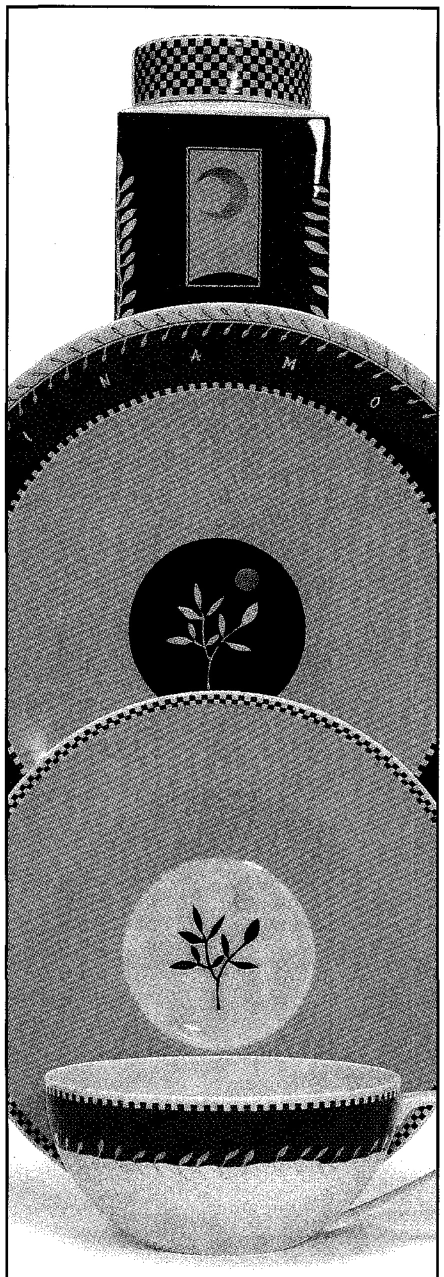

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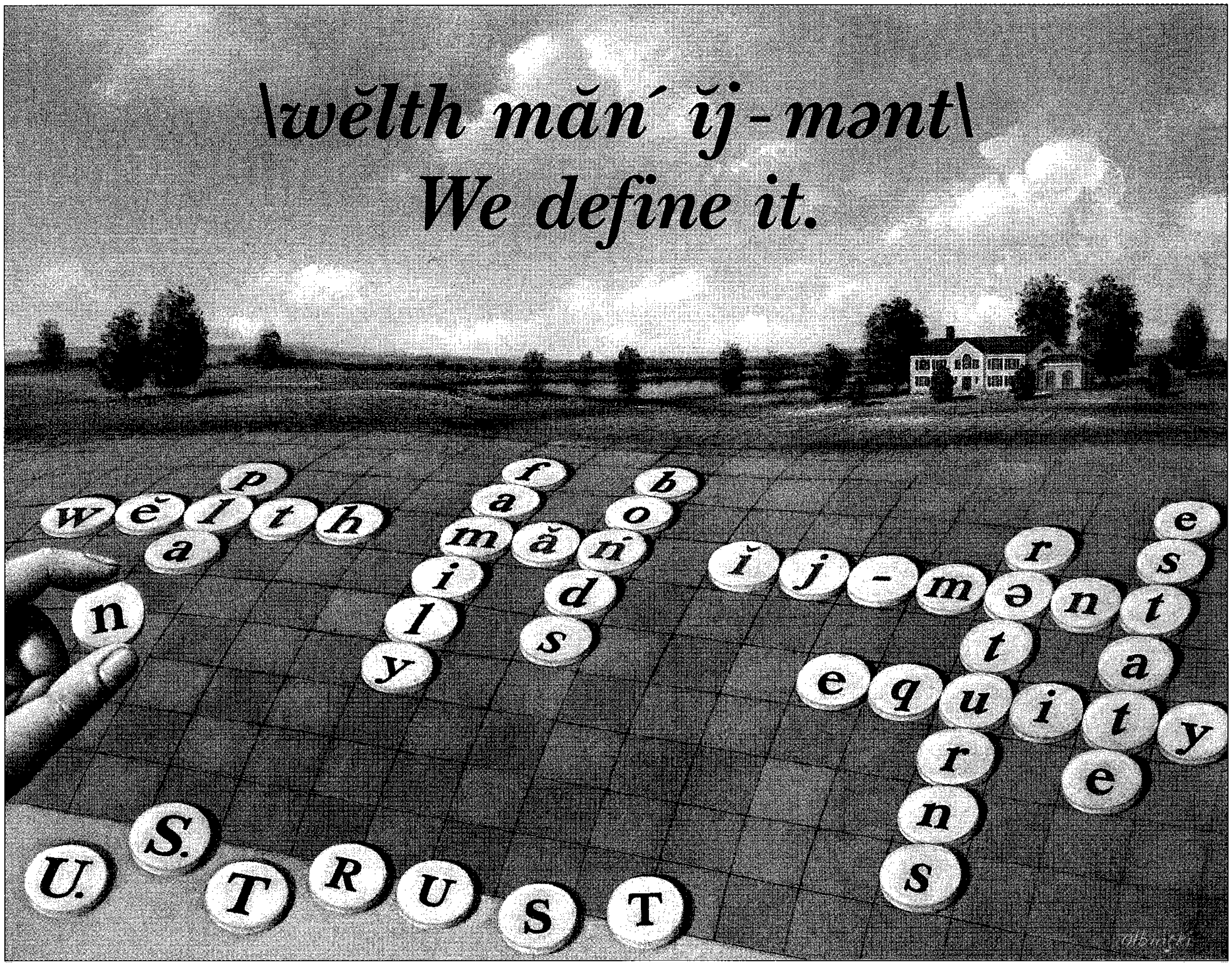

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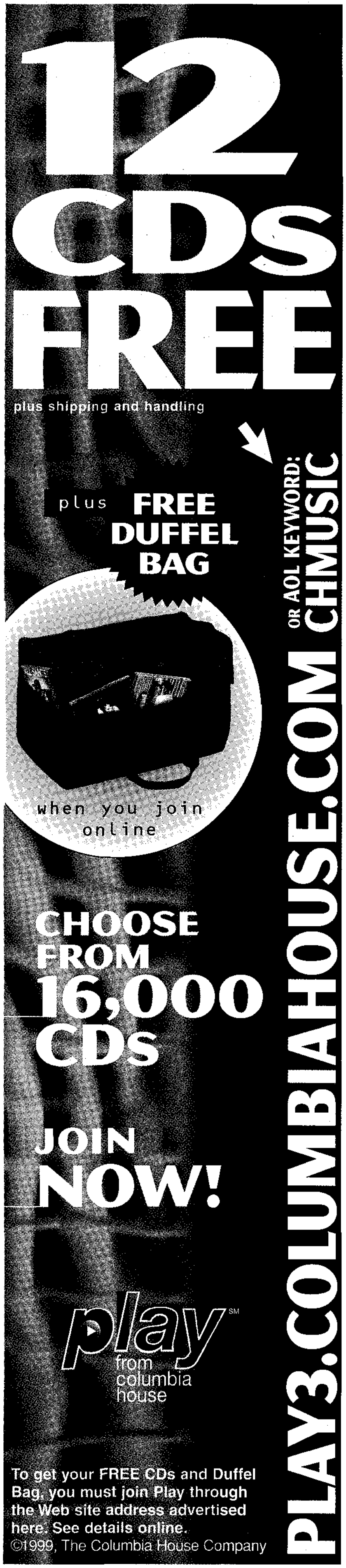
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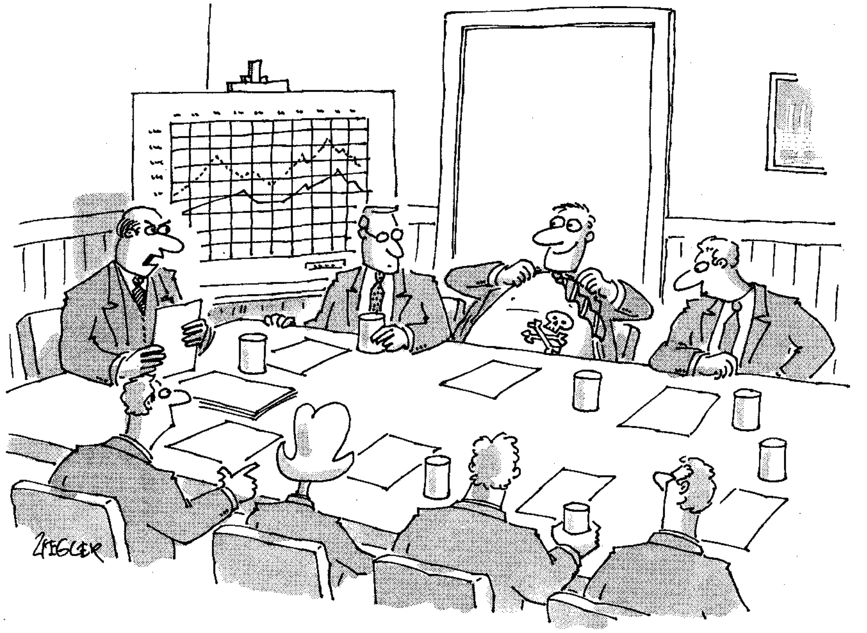

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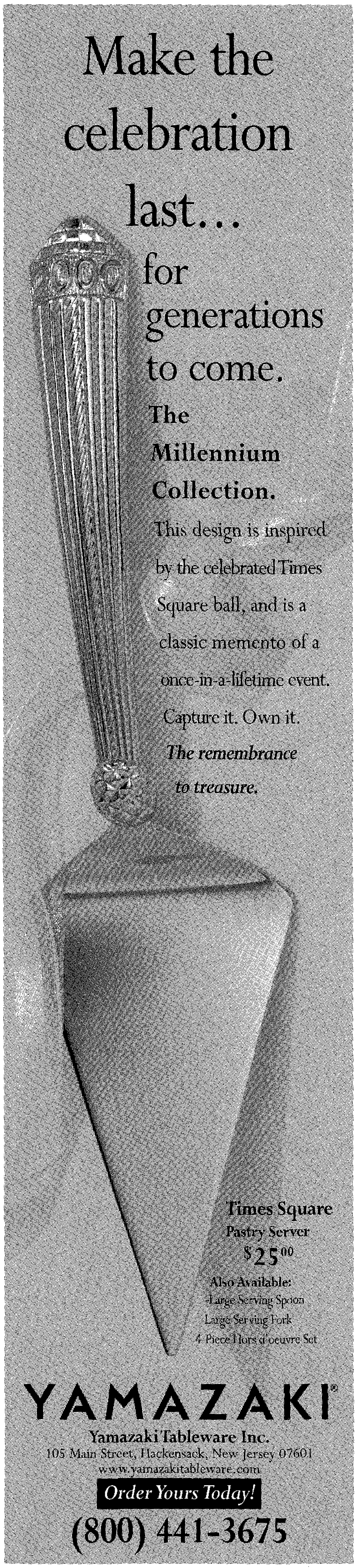
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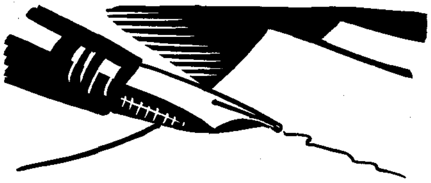

TRUST AND ANTITRUST

I don't know if Microsoft has actually violated antitrust laws (Annals of Communication, "Hard Core," by Ken Auletta, August 16th), but I do know that their behavior harms the consumer. I am a technical writer, and I estimate that ten per cent of my professional resources—money, time, gray matter—are spent buying, upgrading, installing, debugging, and learning to use new computer software and hardware that I don't want. Imagine the howl that would go up if government policies resulted in an additional ten per cent business tax. With new software, it works like this: Microsoft releases a new version of, say, Windows. Pretty soon I get files from clients that I can't read or that contain features my present software doesn't support. Six months later, I give in and buy the new Microsoft product, even though my old systems are working fine otherwise. By contrast, I drive a Honda that's a few years old now. I'm aware that Honda has new models out with lots of nifty new features. But the existence of those models doesn't affect my car. And though most companies in the computer industry promote forced obsolescence, Microsoft, with its monopoly on key software and its short product cycles, is the worst offender.

James Wick
Tunbridge, Vt.

Mr. Auletta notes that, although Microsoft views such innovations as the program ClearType (which seeks to improve the resolution on P.C. screens) as serving consumers, the government "claims they serve to solidify Microsoft's monopoly." The government's reasoning recalls Judge Learned Hand's comments during a landmark antitrust suit against ALCOA in 1945. Hand wrote that ALCOA "insists that it never excluded competitors; but we can think of no more effective exclusion than progressively to embrace each new opportunity as it opened, and to face every newcomer with new capacity already geared into a great organization, having the advantage of experience, trade connections and the elite of personnel." It seems that, if companies fail to innovate, the market will eliminate them, and, if they innovate too well, the government will do the same. Though strong arguments were made by both sides, ALCOA eventually lost, prompting Alan Greenspan to conclude some years later that ALCOA was "being condemned for being too successful, too efficient, and too good a competitor." Sound familiar?

Benjamin Leever
Springboro, Ohio

LOST VEGAS

I'm a native Las Vegan (though I was born years after the town's small, personal charms had disappeared), and, like the many "old timers" who voted, for nostalgic reasons, for the city's new mayor, Oscar Goodman, I miss the town I knew as I was growing up (Letter from Las Vegas, "They Love Me!," by Connie Bruck, August 16th). When I drive to Vegas, I don't even recognize it anymore. But do those who voted for Goodman really think that with him in office the old happy days will return? (I am not referring to the days when the Mafia was "running" the town.) Do they think that the half million or so newcomers who have flocked to Vegas in the last decade, who don't respect historic preservation, and who are sucking up whatever water is left, will go home? That the Sands, Landmark, Aladdin, Dunes, and other beloved landmarks torn down to make way for monstrous Eurotrash resorts will magically reappear? All that the people who elected Goodman have done is to help Vegas be taken even less seriously than it already was.

Karen Van Splawn
St. George, Utah

•

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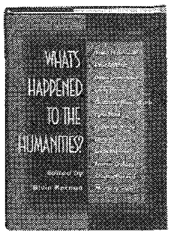
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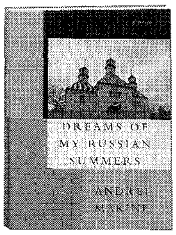
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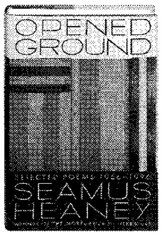
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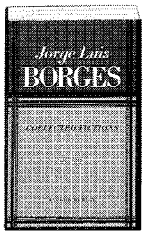
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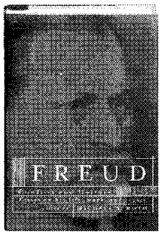

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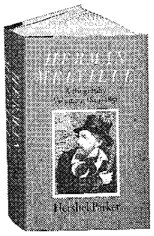
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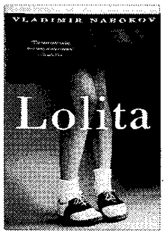
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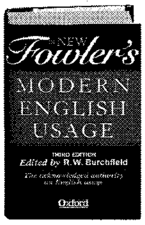
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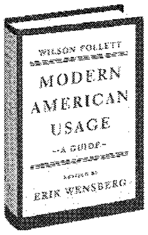
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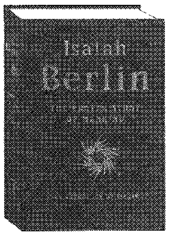
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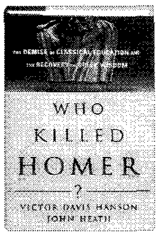
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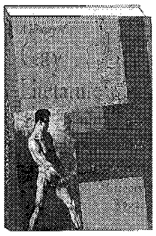

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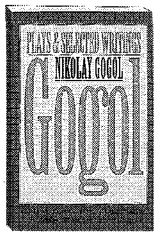
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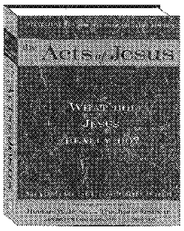
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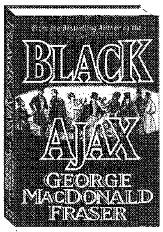
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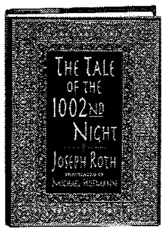
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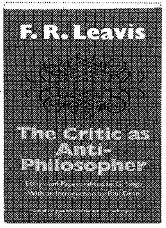
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Avenue A—The 29th Street Rep's production of David Steen's drama about the effects of urban decay. Previews begin Sept. 9. (212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

The Country Club—From the Drama Dept., a new comedy by Douglas Carter Beane ("As Bees in Honey Drown"), about a group of burned-out Wasps in their thirties, who gather during eleven holidays over the course of a year. Previews begin Sept. 14. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 541-8441.)

Epic Proportions—Kristin Chenoweth heads the cast of a new comedy by Larry Coen and David Crane, set in the thirties in the Arizona desert, during the filming of a Hollywood Biblical epic. Jerry Zaks is the director. In previews. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Exact Center of the Universe—Joan Vail Thorne's comedy, in which a small-town Southerner (Reed Birney) is torn between his overbearing mother (Frances Sternhagen) and his sweetheart (Tracy Thorne), reopens at a new theatre following its staging last spring by Women's Projects and Productions. Opens Sept. 8 at 8. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Give Me Your Answer, Do!—Brian Friel's latest play, which centers on the rivalry between two writers. The cast includes Kate Burton, Helen Carey, Michael Emerson, John Glover, Gawn Grainger, Joel Grey, and Lois Smith. Previews begin Sept. 10. Presented by the Roundabout. (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900.)

Monster—The Toronto troupe da da kamera comes to P.S. 122 with Daniel MacIvor's one-man play, in which he portrays multiple characters in a series of intertwined horror tales. Sept. 9-12 at 7:30. Continues through Sept. 26. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Psyche—An outdoor, multimedia play, adapted by Ralph Lee from Molière's "Psyché" and Heywood's "Love's Mistress," which incorporates puppets, masks, dance, and music. Sept. 10-12 at 7:30. Continues through Sept. 19. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 929-4777.)

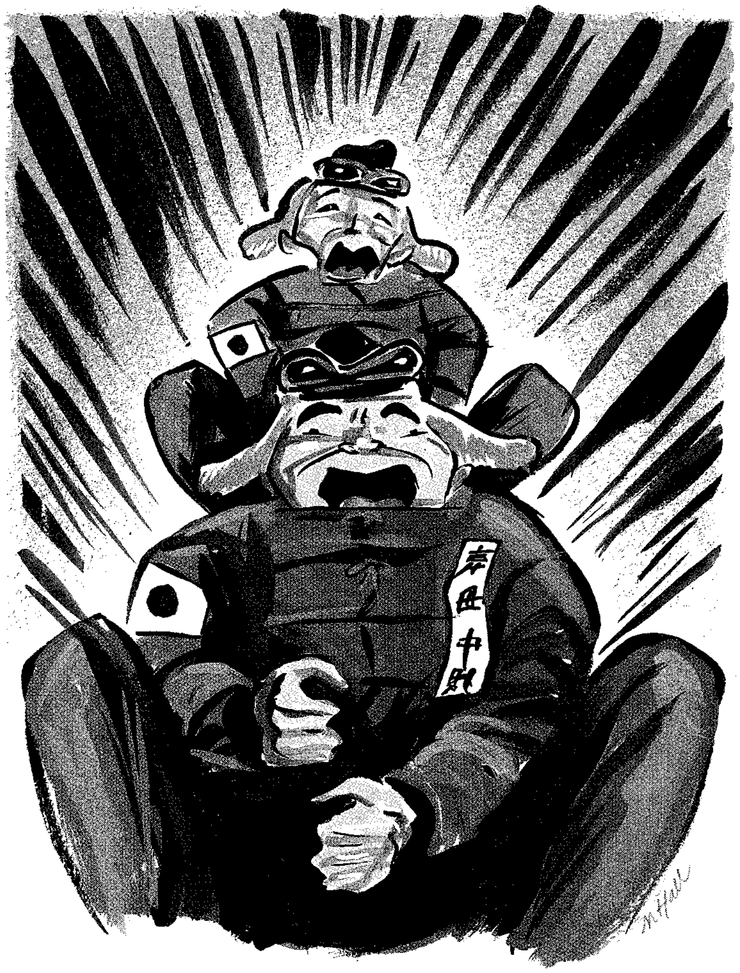
The Right Size—The British comedy duo of Sean Foley and Hamish McColl bring their West End hit, "Do You Come Here Often?," in which two men are locked together in a bathroom for twenty-five years, to P.S. 122. In previews. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Signature Theatre Company—The Maria Irene Fornes season begins with two one-acts, "Mud" and "Drowning," directed by David Esbjornson. Previews begin Sept. 14. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

A Streetcar Named Desire—Elizabeth Marvel portrays Blanche DuBois, in Ivo van Hove's staging of Tennessee Williams's play. In previews through Sept. 11. Opens Sept. 12 at 3. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Whoa-Jack!—David Greenspan and Queen Esther have joined the cast of the Worth Street Theatre's encore staging of a drama by Jeff Cohen, set on a Southern Army base during the civil-rights movement. Previews Sept. 10-11. Opens Sept. 12 at 3. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7148.)

The Winds of God—Two contemporary Tokyo comedians killed in a motorcycle wreck are reincarnated as Second World War kamikaze pilots, in a comedy by Masayuki Imai, who co-stars. In previews. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)



Masayuki Imai and Risu Matsumoto, in "The Winds of God."

MARCELLUS HALL

OPENED RECENTLY

Chicago City Limits—The improv company presents a new revue, "Y2K, You're O.K." (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

The Countess—A drama by Gregory Murphy, about the tangled relationship between the nineteenth-century art critic John Ruskin, his wife, and Ruskin's protégé John Everett Millais. (Samuel Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 594-2826.)

Dear Liar—Marian Seldes and Donal Donnelly portray Mrs. Patrick Campbell and George Bernard Shaw, in a drama that Jerome Kilty based on letters written during the forty-year clandestine love affair between the actress and the playwright. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Sept. 19.)

Eugene O'Neill Festival—The second season in a five-year undertaking of O'Neill's œuvre by Playwrights Theatre continues through Sept. 12 with "The Personal Equation." (Provincetown Playhouse, 133 Macdougal St. For information about tickets, call 998-5801.)

The Gathering—A Shabbat dinner set during the spring of Reagan's controversial visit to

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Bitburg (the German cemetery where, it is believed, Nazi soldiers are buried) turns into political crossfire between a Dachau survivor (Ben Hammer) and his son (Robert Fass), who is a speechwriter for the President. It could have been a sombre, if not overly burdened, affair, were it not for the comic tone of the tightly scripted first act. The mood slows to a more ponderous pace in the second. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 239-6200.)

It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues—A marvellous collection of songs performed by a dynamic cast. The music alone could have showcased the influence of the blues, but instead the audience is subjected to explanatory notes and bad-talk-show banter. Fortunately, the blues triumphantly survives even this. The show reopens at the Ambassador on Sept. 9. (219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

It's My Party (and I'll Die If I Want To)—F. Murray Abraham leads a cast that includes Joyce Van Patten and Adam Grupper, in a family comedy by Elizabeth Coleman. (ArcLight, 152 W. 71st St. 307-4100. Closes Sept. 19.)

Jar the Floor—The plot of Cheryl L. West's new play tends toward melodrama and predictability, but it doesn't matter—the core of the show is strong, funny character studies of five women (four generations of a black family and a friend) played by five powerhouse actresses. There's a lesson about dysfunctional families, but also a fine, humorous, and heartwarming evocation of strength and love. Irma P. Hall, as the matriarch, is particularly memorable; the evening is cleanly directed by Marion McClinton. It all takes place in Second Stage's new home, a bank that has been converted into a funky yet gracious theatre space. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422. Closes Sept. 12.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—The company opens its season with Tom Stoppard's 1981 comedy, "On the Razzle," directed by Scott Shattuck. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Kat and the Kings—A rock-and-roll musical by Taliep Petersen and David Kramer, set in Cape Town in 1957, about a doo-wop group trying to make it big. Mr. Kramer is the director. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Live Sax Acts—David Dorfman and Dan Froot perform a play they co-wrote investigating the complexities of male friendship and romance. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Closes Sept. 12.)

Summer '69—A revue tracing a group of music fans' trip to the original Woodstock festival. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight—Peter Ackerman's screwball bedroom comedy consists mainly of a sublimely ridiculous conference call involving three pairs of lovers. The questions about sex and the proper balance between intellectual and physical attraction have no answers, but Ackerman has some interesting suggestions, and, to his credit, comedy outweighs the theorizing. John Rando, the director, has a good eye, and the show comes off beautifully. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

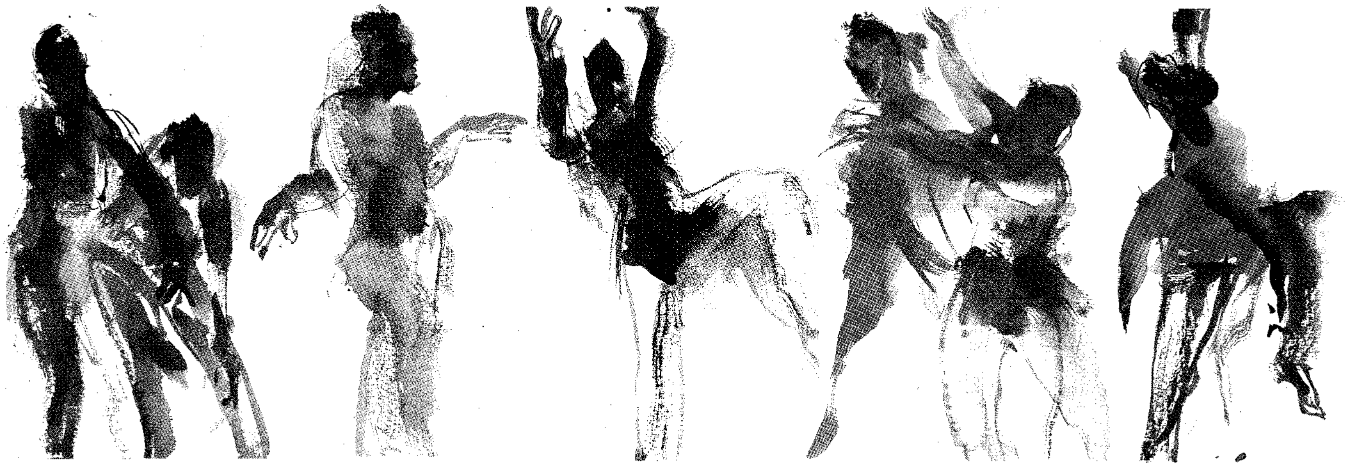
Thwak—Comic acrobatics (both physical and vocal) from the Australian performers David Collins and Shane Dundas, a.k.a. the Umbilical Brothers. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Voices in the Dark—In this age of computer-generated gore, the actress Judith Ivey, playwright John Pielmeier ("Agnes of God"), and director Christopher Ashley have achieved the impossible, a truly thrilling stage thriller. It's a classic plot: Ivey plays a radio-talk-show host who gets a call from a wacko, then heads off to an isolated cabin for a peaceful weekend—oops! Ivey and the writing are smart and funny, and the scares are both unanticipated and really scary; the plot includes some nice twists, and the supporting cast carry the whole thing off with style. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Weir—Conor McPherson's play takes place in the musty chill of a backwater Irish pub, where a handful of habitués chew the cud of their solitude, spinning ghostly yarns. It has a bittersweet charm, but for all the well-crafted talk and the well-observed bonhomie, it is finally a shaggy-bog story. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/12/99.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN: Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DEATH OF A SALESMAN:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **DE LA GUARDA:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOOTLOOSE:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOSSE:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Ibis, 327 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SIDE MAN:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **WIT:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.



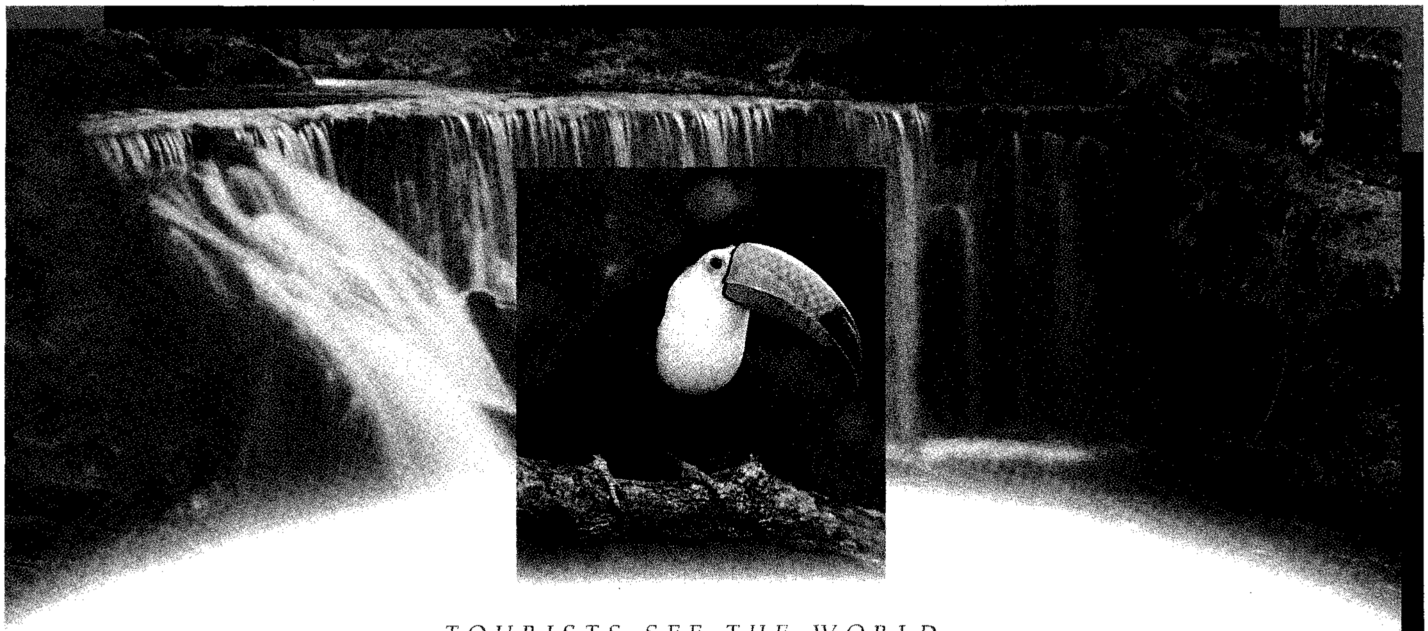
The Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group in "Qoqoda," at Dance Theatre Workshop.

DEBORAH ROSS

DANCE

Dance Theatre Workshop—Sept. 7-8 at 8: Gabri Christa and Cynthia Oliver in "Lukosimad." (Through Sept. 26.) . . . ¶ Sept. 9-10 at 8: The choreographer Reggie Wilson has created a sort of genealogical inquiry rendered in dance, an impulse that began as he looked into the African roots of habits he first observed growing up in the Baptist church in Milwaukee. As his investigations have progressed farther back along the path of the African diaspora, his choreography has become looser and more assured, moving from theatrical re-creations of ring shouts in the Mississippi Delta and Trinidadian shouter-Baptist rituals to more indirect presentations, such as his current work "Qoqoda" (Ndebele for "knocking," a word he learned during his collaboration with dancers in the Black Umfolosi troupe from Zimbabwe). In this new piece, the dancers perform Wilson's typical movements (sweeping arm and leg gestures, with the dancers' weight either rooted or shifting forcefully) in miniskirts fashioned out of West African prints that Wilson bought in Trinidad. "Instead of having one influence, I'm just playing," Wilson says. "The more I learn, the more comfortable I feel with Ndebele, the less it feels like stealing." (Through Sept. 19.) . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 8 and Sept. 12 at 3: David Dorfman and Dan Froot in "Live Sax Acts." . . . ¶ Sept. 14-15 at 8: Ellis Wood and her company in "Home for the Naked." (Through Oct. 3.) (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

"Lava Love"—Sarah East Johnson's troupe, Lava, presents a slate of circus-skill routines—trapeze and balancing acts, hoop diving, human pyramids, hula-hoop and pogo-stick numbers—performed with subtleties of pace and emphasis taken from the world of dance. Johnson likes to compare both the power of women and the dynamics of love to volcanic forces, but she keeps such themes subterranean. Adults sense the undercurrent of muscular eroticism, kids love the dog act. (Flea Theatre,



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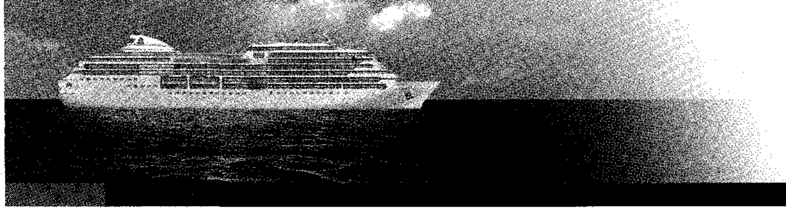

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41 White St. 226-0051. Sept 9-10 at 8 and Sept. 11-12 at 3 and 8. Through Oct. 2.)

Pilar Rioja—The marquesa of Spanish dance offers a valuable lesson in the regional variations of the form. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Sept. 8, Sept. 12, and Sept 14 at 7; Sept 10 at 8; and Sept. 11 at 3. Through Sept. 26.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

"Keep Bangin'"—"Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk" may have closed, but the beat goes on. Raymond King, Darrell Dove, Jr., and Larry Wright, the musicians who created the onstage percussion for the Broadway show, bang away on pots and pans, plastic buckets, drums, and other props. The sticks fly. Sweat drenches their shirts. Just a few feet from the flurry, you watch, mesmerized. Directed by Savion Glover. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 9; Sundays at 3 and 7. (Players Theatre, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

Lenny Kravitz—Kravitz did little to lessen his reputation as rock's premier undertaker when he murdered the Guess Who's "American Woman" (despite fine gyrational assistance from starlet Heather Graham) for the soundtrack to "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me." Lenny seems to relish his role as rock-cliché tour guide, but his tepid sales indicate the kids aren't buying into his shtick. With the ska punk of Smash Mouth and the hard rock of Buckcherry. (Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Sept. 8 at 8.)

Carey Bell—An accomplished disciple of harmonica masters Little Walter (Jacobs) and Big Walter Horton. (World Financial Center Plaza, Battery Park City. Sept. 9 at 12:15. No tickets necessary.)

Victor Lewis Trio—There's a sensual pleasure in watching great drummers like Lewis. Every move is smooth, perfectly balanced, and seemingly effortless. For the sublime lift he brings to a bandstand, Lewis's bandmates should pay him. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9480. Sept. 10 at 5:30.)

Maxwell—It's tough to be an avatar of old-school R. & B. in a world driven by Latin music, rap, rage rock, and teenybop pop (see Barry White and Earth, Wind and Fire, below). More than a year after the release of his last album, the underrated (if slightly overreaching) "Embrya," Maxwell and his buttery tenor have quietly restored a little dignity to the forgotten art of soul. (The Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Sept. 10-12 at 8.)

Dave Matthews Band—The immensely popular combo, still beloved for its namesake's boyish charm (and grownup lyrics) and its ability to turn a single song into a twenty-minute exercise in noodling. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. Sept. 11 at 7:30.)

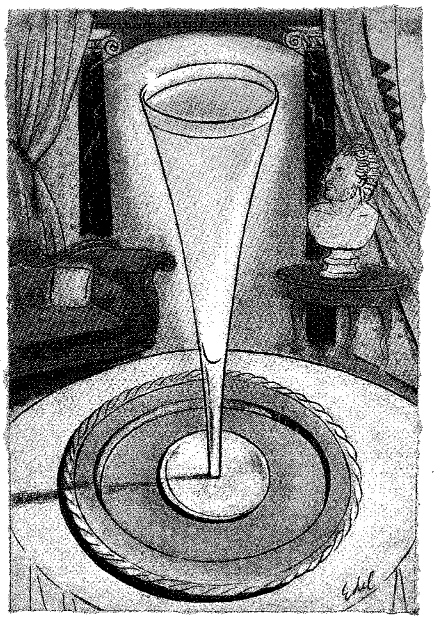
Barry White / Earth, Wind and Fire—The bodacious basso profundo joins the first group to successfully master the alchemy of turning funk and falsetto into a fully orchestrated, high-production art (we need you more than ever, Maurice White). (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Sept. 11 at 7:30.)

Edwin McCain—Roots-rocker McCain—a labelmate and fellow-townsman of Charleston, South Carolina,'s favorite sons, Hootie & the Blowfish—keeps the faith with his latest release, "The Messenger." With the down-and-dirty blues of the Beth Hart Band. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Sept. 11 at 8.)

Twenty-fourth New York Salsa Festival—Featuring the Sir George All-Stars, Gilberto Santa Rosa, Brenda K. Starr, Tito Nieves, Frankie Negron, Milly Quezada, Charlie Cardona, Victor Manuelle, Sergio Vargas, Charlie Cruz, and Elvis Crespo. (Madison Square Garden. Sept. 11 at 8.)

The Sidney Bechet Society—Presenting a jam session with trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, clarinettist Evan Christopher, trumpeter Spanky Davis, bassist Jack Lesberg, drummer Jackie Williams, and pianist Mark Shane. (Theatre at Greenwich Village Center, 219 Sullivan St. Sept. 13 at 6:15 and 8:30. For more information, call 516-627-4468.)

Chris Cornell—Although Pearl Jam has a fluke hit single with "Last Kiss," grunge has long since received its last rites. Now, however, the alternative god best known as the voice of Soundgarden (Seattle's third favorite rock band) is embarking on a solo career. On his new album, "Euphoria Morning," Cornell's werewolf howl is intact and centerstage, but the testosterone guitars have given way to twelve well-crafted tunes that beg for a description not normally associated with grunge: Beatle-esque. (Town Hall. Sept. 14 at 8.)



GOLDEN OLDIE: *In medieval Russia, long before vodka was first distilled, a honey-based alcoholic brew called medovukha was the drink of choice. Honey was so much a part of Russian life that fairy tales traditionally ended with the testimonial "And I was there, I drank honey and beer, down my moustache it dripped, never got to my lips." These days, the house cocktail at the Firebird Café (365 W. 46th St.; 586-0244), a restaurant that's decorated like a pre-Revolutionary St. Petersburg mansion, is a honey vodka. The drink is based on a recipe from the Middle Ages, and the main components are supported by cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, fresh mint, black pepper, vanilla bean, and lemon and orange juice, whose exact proportions are a closely guarded secret. It arrives cold, in a chilled miniature champagne flute, and each sip is, at first, richly spiced and bracing. Then, as the alcohol disappears, your palate encounters a long-lingering sweetness that comes close to pure bliss. Na zdorov'e!*

Low—This ghostly Duluth trio specializes in high-impact emotion without histrionics (a guitar solo is often just a methodically strummed single note). Their minimalist approach speaks volumes: listening to Low could make you throw out your Xanax. With the chaotic L.A. art rock of Scarnella. (Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. 505-5110. Sept. 14 at 9.)

CLUBS

(Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—A narrow, dimly lit renovated bodega that's the ideal environment for three to five unknown bands a night struggling their way out of obscurity. Sept. 13: The Brooklyn ensemble **LES SANS CULOTTES** play raunchy faux-French rock and roll that's both a sendup of and a tribute to the dark tunes of late-period Serge Gainsbourg and punchy *ye-ye* girl pop. They put on a very silly show, going so far as to perform in frilly underthings.

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Sept. 9: In 1958, guitarist **LINK WRAY** decided to punch a pencil through his amplifier speakers; the result was the landmark instrumental "Rumble," which gave birth to one of rock's enduring staples—the power chord. Sept. 10: The precocious Irish folksinger **LUKA BLOOM,** best known for his ingenious acoustic cover of LL Cool J's "I Need Love."

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Sept. 8: The **WILD COLONIALS,** once the salonistes of the L.A. music scene (Dr. John, Cyndi Lauper, and Rickie Lee Jones appeared on the band's 1996 CD, "This Can't Be Life"), have since lost their record deal. Fortunately, the band soldiers on, still driven by Angela McCluskey's heartfelt honey-and-hot-sauce vocals. With **JOY ASKEW,** a veteran of Peter Gabriel and Joe Jackson's bands, performing her own exotic tunes, and the high-energy pop of **MIGHTYHEAD.** Sept. 10: The **HANK DOGS,** a folk-rock trio from South London discovered by Fairport Convention producer Joe Boyd. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Sept. 9: The United Kingdom's greatest export since single-malt Scotch, the **BETA BAND** (three lads from Edinburgh and a fourth from Portsmouth) create wacked-out pop equally capable of making you see double and giving you a headache (just like a good Scotch). Their eponymous Stateside début album careens from goofy raps to New Wave beats to Beatle-esque pop, sometimes in the span of a single song. And their live shows are equally perplexing. Earlier this summer they hid in the shadows on a gauze-draped stage at the Bowery Ballroom while scenes of supermarket interiors and pastoral landscapes flashed on a screen behind them. An acquired taste, perhaps, but top-shelf. Sept. 10: The eighties synth-rock cabal **THE ALAN PARSONS LIVE PROJECT.** . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Sept. 9-10: Stephin Merritt, the **MAGNETIC FIELDS'S** mastermind, has become one of New York's most respected underground artists and a reluctant antihero whose music is as catchy as his dour bons mots are clever. On these two nights the Fields present songs from their new, wildly eclectic CD, "69 Love Songs." Sept. 11: **GIL SCOTT-HERON.** In the seventies, while many of his R. & B. peers were blissfully succumbing to disco fever, singer-pianist (and poet-novelist) Scott-Heron was fusing jazz and funk textures with sobering political rap. With **CARL HANCOCK RUX,** a young poet from Harlem who has quickly made his way from the dark corners of the Nuyorican Poets Café to the bright lights of a major-label record deal. His new album, "Rux Revue," is a captivating account of the artist's life—from "Blue Candy," a song about his discovery, at age four, of his grandmother's dead body, to "No Black Male Show," which deals with his experiences in the entertainment business.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Sept. 10: **LINK WRAY** (see the Bowery Ballroom). Sept. 11: **LUKA BLOOM** (see the Bowery Ballroom). The late show features first-class jump blues, Western swing, and rockabilly with the Los Angeles sextet **BIG SANDY & HIS FLY-RITE BOYS.** Sept. 12: Ever since its 1992 single "Runaway Train" won the Grammy for best rock song, the Minneapolis quartet **SOUL ASYLUM** has all but disappeared. Sept. 13: **LOW** and **SCARNELLA** (see Concerts).

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Sept. 10: New York-via-Oklahoma songwriter **BRUCE HENDERSON,** who used to front the High Plains Drifters with G. E. Smith, rolls in with songs from his latest album, "Beyond the Pale." Henderson's songs evoke the heartache of cloudy days in the car crossing the Plains, and his unvarnished voice wraps around you like the winds of a coming storm.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar. It's just about the best free house in town. Sept. 10: The Chicago-based alternative-country outfit **MOUNT PILOT.**

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Sept. 13: **TITO PUENTE.** The timbales king was there when Latin music gained a foothold on the American consciousness back in the late forties, he stuck by it through the lean years, and, with the music's resurgence, he's still here, whipping dancers into a frenzy and driving concert audiences into the aisles to boogie. Dining.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Sept. 8: An electronica festival featuring **DJ OLIVE** in a dub set and the sonic and sartorial innovator **DJ SOUL SLINGER** (the founder of Liquid Sky D-Sign). Sept. 9: The festival continues with **LIMINAL** and **LOOP.** Sept. 12: Guitarist **DAVE SCHRAMM** performs an acoustic set. With **THE HOLY MODAL ROUNDERS,** Peter Stampfel and Steve Weber's thirty-six-year-old folk-rock group.

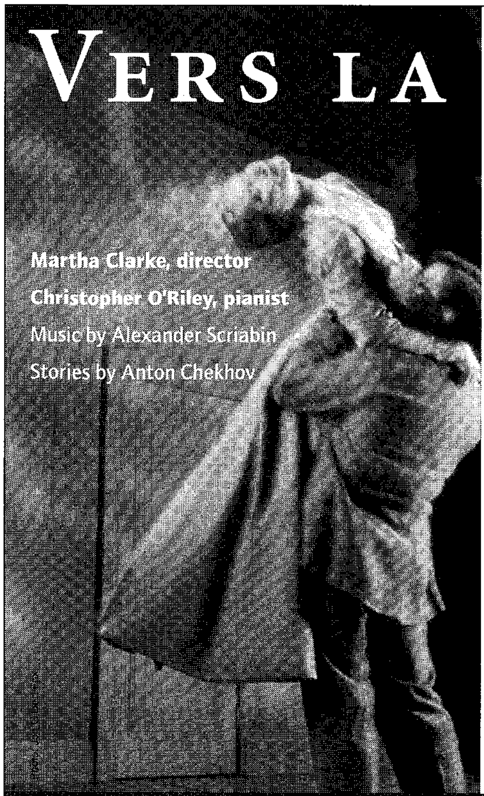
Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Sept. 11: **SOUL ASYLUM** (see Maxwell's). Sept. 14: K Records, the vital indie-rock outfit in Olympia, Washington, run by Dub Narcotic Sound System and Beat Happening honcho Calvin Johnson, brings three of its bands to town. The Washington, D.C., quartet **MAKE UP,** purveyors of a self-described "gospel yeh, yeh" sound, rose from the ashes of the seminal hardcore band Nation of Ulysses. Its lead singer, Ian Svenonious, preaches with religious conviction, sprinkling his performances liberally with "amen"s. The group's forthcoming album, "Save Yourself," has a funky, dosed sixties sound, as if James Brown had been a member of the Doors. **ENEMY MINE** makes raucous music with a simple philosophy—two basses and a drum kit. **IQU** shakes some booty with the help of a theremin. With the local downtown aesthetes **LES SAVY FAV.**

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Sept. 10: A marathon night of hip-hop, with **POOR RIGHTEOUS TEACHERS, HELTAH SKELTAH, DEAD PREZ, POLYRHYTHM ADDICTS,** and others.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**MARY CLEERE HARAN,** the preëminent interpreter of the great American songbook, is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room, turning her attention to the popular songs of the Roaring Twenties. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Sept. 8-11: Trumpeter **JON FADDIS,** trombonist **STEVE TURRE,** and saxophonist **JIMMY HEATH** all have


VERS LA FLAMME

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Christopher O'Riley, pianist
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Stories by Anton Chekhov

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Pre-concert lecture by Harlow Robinson, 2pm and 7pm

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a firm association with the late, great Dizzy Gillespie, which only adds lustre to their reputations as smart, forthright, modern bop musicians. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Sept. 12: Super drummer **ELVIN JONES** celebrates his seventy-second birthday by inviting tenor saxophonist **MICHAEL BRECKER** to help him commune with the spirit of Jones's old employer John Coltrane. Defying age even further, Jones hooks up at the late shows on Sept. 7-9 with the avant-garde pianist **CECIL TAYLOR**, another septuagenarian dynamo who has yet to show his collaborators any mercy. Iconic encounters hardly come any weightier than this. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Sept. 12: The **MARCUS PRINTUP** and **WESS ANDERSON** quintet. Two more sturdy players from Wynton Marsalis's universe—trumpeter Printup and saxophonist Anderson—find strength in numbers. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Sept. 8-12: **JANE BUNNETT AND THE SPIRITS OF HAVANA.** Using her intercontinental flexibility as a Canadian citizen, soprano saxophonist and flutist Bunnett began visiting Cuba and collaborating with its musical masters years before Ry Cooder and Wim Wenders stuck their heads in the door of the Buena Vista Social Club. Dining.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Sept. 9: Free-jazz and downtown-rock drummer **WILLIAM HOOKER,** who over the past two decades has collaborated with Elliott Sharp, Thurston Moore, and Lee Ranaldo. Sept. 11: The saxophonist **CHARLES GAYLE** defends his neo-expressionist turf, eschewing chord changes and polite tonalities for raw and focussed emotion. Brave music for brave listeners. Sept. 12: As one of the components of the late Thomas Chapin's popular trio, bassist **MARIO PAVONE** is an old hand at tight-knit improvisation. His own trio features the rousing drummer **MATT WILSON** and pianist **PETER MADSEN,** and the leader's flavorful compositions. Sept. 13: Violinist **SAM BARFELD'S** Cabal Fatale unites bassist **DREW GRESS,** drummer **MIKE SARIN,** and guitarist **KEN WESSEL.** Sept. 14: There hasn't been a stylistic straitjacket yet designed that the madcap Dutch percussionist **HAN BENNINK** can't wriggle out of. He's as accomplished as he is witty.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Sept. 12: The **MADS VINDING** trio. Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen may be the first name that comes to mind when the conversation invariably turns to world-class Danish bassists, but the prodigiously gifted Vinding is another chip off the Scandinavian block. With his work cut out for him in Europe, Vinding hardly ever gets to show off his astonishing powers in New York City. Dining.

Up Over Jazz Cafe, 351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—Sept. 10-11: The **JAMES SPAULDING** quartet. Spaulding, a ubiquitous presence on alto saxophone and flute during the sixties, has smoothed out a few of the edges that made his playing so, well, edgy back then, but his taste for heated improvisation remains.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Sept. 12: The **CLARK TERRY** quintet. Terry is a very funny guy and one of the most sophisticated flugelhorn players and trumpeters around. He came up through the big bands, notably Basie's and Ellington's (where he enjoyed a brilliant stint), and he has a personal style that blurs the lines between swing and its younger brother bop. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—A young guitarist with flying fingers and a heart filled with bebop, **RON AFFIF** has a regular Monday gig at an intimate space that caters to guitar freaks—just right for a six-string whiz with almost too much to say. Saturdays and Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—As part of the run-up to the museum's exhibition of Ingres portraits, which opens in October, "Costume and Character in the Age of Ingres" gathers examples of the court fashions popular in the artist's heyday, from undergarments (chemises, corsets, petticoats, crinolines) to elaborately detailed formal wear in the sort of vibrant colors and opulent fabrics that Ingres depicted. Through Nov. 21.... ¶ Sharing the Roof Garden with Rodin's "Three Shades" this summer is a group of monumental bronzes by the great, gloomy Polish sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz. Three of the five are new works, created especially for the installation here: a pair of colossal skulls, a flock of beautiful, weighty birds, and a troop of nearly life-size headless figures who stand at attention, as though waiting for some mournful command. Through late fall. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"To be a good Abstract Expressionist painter," Robert Rauschenberg once said, "you have to be able to feel really sorry for yourself." That was something that Rauschenberg, perhaps the world's most angstless and ebullient artist, was not able to do. Instead, he began making a kind of bemused, cheerful anti-Abstract Expressionism, an art that combined the viscous freedom of Ab Ex brushwork with the astringent presence of trash and bric-a-brac. The result, as a small exhibition of his nineteen-fifties "Combine" paintings reminds us, was magic: for a few years Rauschenberg couldn't put two things together in an uninteresting way. The identical-twin paintings at the heart of the show, "Factum I" and "Factum II" (the latter is a new acquisition, the former on loan from the L.A. MOCA), represent the peak of this amazing period. Like a great athlete, Rauschenberg performs a freaky, unrepeatable feat—and then repeats it, just because you thought he couldn't. Through Oct. 5.... ¶ In the era of the gas-guzzling S.U.V., "Different Roads: Automobiles for the Next Century" offers an appealingly contrarian view of our automotive future, in the form of nine sleek European-size roadsters parked in the Rockefeller Sculpture Garden. The smallest of these new models, the Daimler-Chrysler Smart Car (developed with Swatch), takes four and a half hours to produce, occupies half a parking space, and has a vaguely familiar, thoracic compactness. It would look great in black, with a pair of mandibles attached to the hood. Through Sept. 21.... ¶ "The Un-Private House." Rather than just present his selection of twenty-six recent house designs as the lively grab bag that it is, curator Terence Riley tries to dress it up as a form of cultural trend-spotting. As far as ideas go, this show is pure bluff. A couple of the projects here—most notably Shigeru Ban's hilarious Curtain Wall house—are apparently intended for clients who have nothing to hide from their neighbors, but for the most part the desire for privacy seems to be on the rise. With their lap pools, ten-thousand-volume libraries, home offices, and high-tech multimedia amenities ("Residents can entertain friends who live thousands of miles away"), most of these lavish dwellings seem like scaled-down variants of Superman's Fortress of Solitude. But, if you set ideas aside, the show is a delight: it's thrilling to see so many genuinely adventurous, even kooky, home designs, and the abundance of scale models makes the exhibition unusually accessible to non-architects. Through Oct. 5.... ¶ "Fame After Photography." Departing from the Modern's usually crisply didactic installation mode, guest curators Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman opt here for an almost unintelligible, jam-packed exhibition of printed, photographic, and cinematic materials that illustrate the bliss and blight of our celebrity-driven culture. For the patient viewer, there are plenty of droll, pathetic, and even aesthetic delights, e.g., a series of publicity pictures of Hollywood's most enduring Medusa, Joan Crawford, and Timothy Greenfield-Sanders's strikingly empathetic portrait of a very pretty Monica Lewinsky. Some of the requisite "art" photographs are tediously predictable, given the show's theme (Nadar's portraits of George Sand and Charles Baudelaire, for instance, or one of Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Stills"). But three of Andy Warhol's famous and seldom seen "Screen Tests" are exceptional. Did you know that Susan Sontag did one? Through Oct. 5. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

Les Sans Culottes, at Arlene Grocery.

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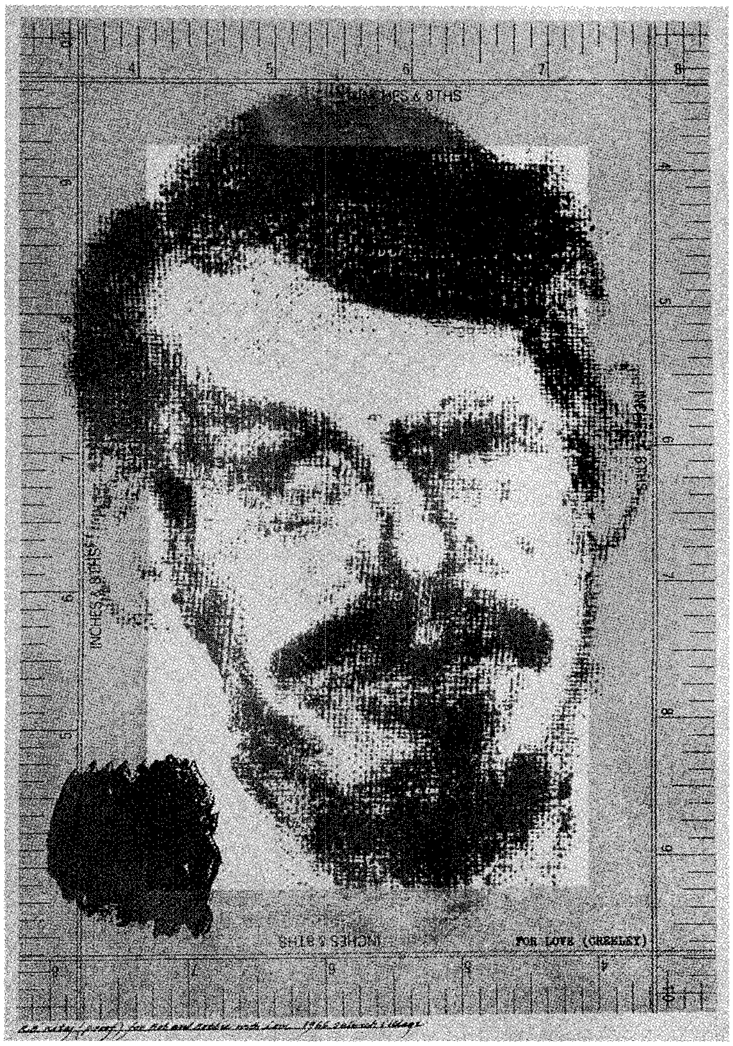


R. B. Kitaj's portrait of Robert Creeley from "In Company," an exhibition devoted to the poet's collaborations, at the New York Public Library.

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Surrealism: Two Private Eyes." A vast exhibition composed of work from the separate collections of publisher Daniel Filipacchi and the late Nesuhi Ertegun, who, as a partner with his brother Ahmet, owned Atlantic Records. The show is rich in terrific works, including such iconic Surrealist masterpieces as René Magritte's "The Rape" (1934), Salvador Dali's "The Phenomenon of Ecstasy" (1933), and Giorgio de Chirico's "The Disquieting Muses" (1925), and two astonishing rooms—one devoted to Cornell boxes, the other to Surrealist bookbinding. There is also a lot of marvellous or at the very least curious work by lesser-known artists. On the other hand, there is a lot of dreck, both by unknown figures and by famous ones having a bad art day. With its idiosyncratic view of the Surrealist movement, this somewhat cumbersome show has nevertheless infused the typically slow summer season with a jolt of energy. Through Sept. 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"Andy Warhol: The Last Supper." In January, the Guggenheim's downtown branch yielded its first floor to Prada, making this address into more of a super-gallery than a boutique museum. "The Last Supper," their first show since the reduction, suits the new space well. Although the series, Warhol's largest and the last before his death, in 1987, was first shown in the Palazzo Stelline in Milan, across the street from the original in the Santa Maria delle Grazie, the questions it poses about art and merchandise seem meant for today's SoHo. In the most inviting and provocative pieces, portions of the world's most reproduced painting are covered with familiar logos: the Wise Chips owl, looking right at Jesus with an eyebrow raised; the Camel camel, hovering above the festivities; and an old Charles Atlas-style ad that reads "Be a somebody with a body," superimposed over the body of Christ. It's miraculously substantive, for Warhol. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Most of the museum is closed for the installation of "The American Century: Art & Culture 1900-2000 (Part II: 1950-99)," which opens Sept. 26. The fifth-floor gallery remains open, at reduced admission.

Whitney Museum at Philip Morris, 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550)—"The Studio Stripped Bare Again," an installation by Jeanne Silverthorne, a sculptor who is fond of electrical paraphernalia. Along the walls of this leafy corporate atrium, she has arranged black rubber circuit-breaker boxes, connected by long parallel lines of conduits and wiring. Several bare-light-bulb fixtures, also in rubber, dangle forlornly from the ceiling. The effect has a sweetly nostalgic, unintrusive elegance. In a smaller gallery, other cast-rubber objects, some of them based on electron photographs of sweat glands, strain for grotesque and cerebral effects. Through Oct. 15. (Open weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—At the center of the new Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth is an eight-foot hemispherical model of our mother ship, rigged with an internal projection system that displays her clouds, oceans, and continents, all in motion. It's the kind of high-tech toy you can imagine Bill Gates installing as a chandelier. Ranged around it are a hundred and sixty-eight chunks of the planet itself. Along with relatively familiar specimens of marble, coral, and sandstone, there are glistening buds of black pillow lava, an ice core, a chimney of pure sulfur, and a ventifact—a rock carved by windblown sand—from Antarctica (it looks as if Henry Moore might have left it there). . . . ¶ "The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition" features more than a hundred and fifty stark and beautiful pictures taken by Frank Hurley, the photographer crewman on that 1914-16 adventure. Also on display are crew members' effects, including clothing and a diary, and the James Caird, the lifeboat in which Shackleton and five of his crew made their amazing eight-hundred-mile journey to South Georgia Island in order to get help and return to rescue the entire expedition—which they did. Through Oct. 11. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Winslow Homer: Illustrating America" displays a hundred and twenty wood engravings, nearly half of Homer's output during the early years of his career, when he worked as a freelance illustrator for publications like *Ballou's Pictorial* and *Harper's Weekly*. Except for a group of pictures depicting camp life in the Union Army, most are genteel courting and sporting scenes: ice-skating parties, croquet games, frolicking swimmers, and bewhiskered gents roughing it in the Adirondacks. It's a pleasure to watch Homer's stiff draftsmanship grow gradually more supple, but the blinkered gaiety of these pictures does occasionally become oppressive. No wonder that, at the end of his life, the artist devoted himself solely to penitential scenes of pounding surf. Through Oct. 10. (Open Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 to 5; Thursdays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St. (956-3535)—"Spirits of the Cloth: Contemporary Quilts by African American Artists." Largely figurative quilts, either tableaux done with appliqués or, as in L'Merchie Frazier's "From a Birmingham Jail," with accumulations of photographs, texts, and beads. Among the more traditional works (that is, pieced and sewn), Virginia Harris's complex, tumbling geometric patterns stand out, and Carolyn Mazloomi's intense black-and-white graphics will make your eyes pop. Downstairs, "Quilts Across America" offers a junior vision of peace through sewing, with fifty cloth squares on the subject of the year 2050, made at primary schools across the country. Through Oct. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

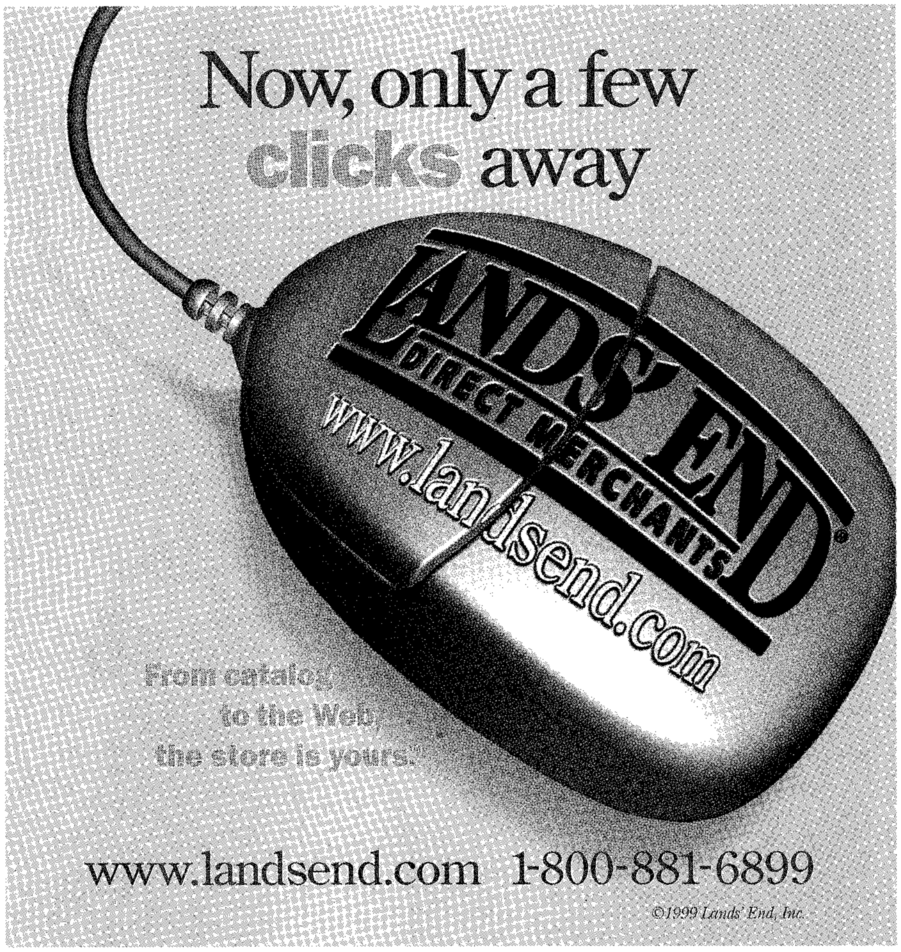
Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City (718-204-7088)—Works from every period in the career of the Japanese-American sculptor (1904-88) are installed in a garden and in open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photo-engraving factory. While it's all of interest—early gold-plated brass works, cast-bronze models for unrealized playgrounds, Japanese paper lanterns adapted for electricity—stone is the core medium. Its names alone (jasper, serpentine, Languedoc marble, red Persian travertine) are sensuous, and the stone sculptures rise among the birches, ivy, brick, and steel of Queens like indigenous art—relics of a civilization. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (534-1672)—"Fashion on Stage: Couture for the Broadway Theater, 1910 to 1955." The dresses and photographs on display here don't show the oversized flounces and frogs expected of costume design—in fact, if it weren't for the extravagance of Valentina's cowl necks and fur-trimmed hems or the bead-and-sequin embroidery over Mainbocher's cotton-eyelet short-sleeved dress, you could almost wear these clothes. In several pictures, a young Katharine Hepburn inhabits them with extraordinary verve. For those captivated by theatre ephemera, the press clips, paper dolls, and "honey-brown curls" of Irene Castle's hair should satisfy. . . . ¶ "Gotham Comes of Age: New York Through the Lens of the Byron Company 1892-1942." Joseph Byron and his son Percy specialized in ship and theatre photography, which means these interior scenes are close and compact, with every inch of space in use. An exuberant self-portrait of the elder Mr. Byron also stands out, with the subject holding the sides of his camera as if he were pinching a child's cheeks. Through Sept. 26. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

National Academy Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (369-4880)—"All That Is Glorious Around Us" (the title comes from James Fenimore Cooper) presents sixty-five landscapes by Hudson River School painters, on loan from an anonymous collector, not all of them glorious. The strongest examples are by relatively obscure talents, from Samuel Coleman, Jr., and Homer Dodge Martin to Eliza Greatorex, while major figures like Cole and Bierstadt are represented by minor, even negligible works. Padding out these surprises and disappointments is plenty of picturesque boilerplate, especially the kind of rosy sunsets that once provoked such critical paroxysms as "And lo! Nature in her surplice of summer, ready to preach a sermon." After acres of such sermonizing crags and branches, it's a pleasure to come upon a small room of landscapes by current Academy members which includes George Nick's gloriously brash plein-air view of Times Square. Through Sept. 12. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, noon to 5, and Fridays, 10 to 6.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway (219-1222)—"Keith Piper: Relocating the Remains." Instead of opting for the conventional mid-career smorgasbord, this British artist has chosen to reheat earlier works, combining them into new computer-based installations. The results are both interesting and confusing. Images of slave ships, contemporary black athletes, antique maps, and passages of text float haphazardly across various monitors and light boxes. Given Piper's preoccupation with racial politics, it's no surprise that this woozy remix has been compared to hip-hop sampling. Most of the time, however, his electronic montages merely suggest a kind of erudite visual Muzak, indistinguishable from some of the opening sequences of PBS documentaries. Through Oct. 17. . . . ¶ "The Times of Our Lives," an exhibition of work that allegedly "explores and critiques the social constructions of age and aging." In fact, it's a chaotic grab bag of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and installations by familiar or unimpressive artists, accompanied by patronizing wall texts that interpret every piece as a virtuous assault upon stereotypes. If Bob Dole in his infamous Pfizer ad (which is included here) had adopted an aggrieved, defensive tone while insisting on full frontal nudity, he would have captured the spirit of this show perfectly. Through Oct. 17. (Open Wednesdays and Sundays, noon to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (869-8089)—"In Company: Robert Creeley's Collaborations" collects evidence of the Black Mountain poet's ceaseless joint



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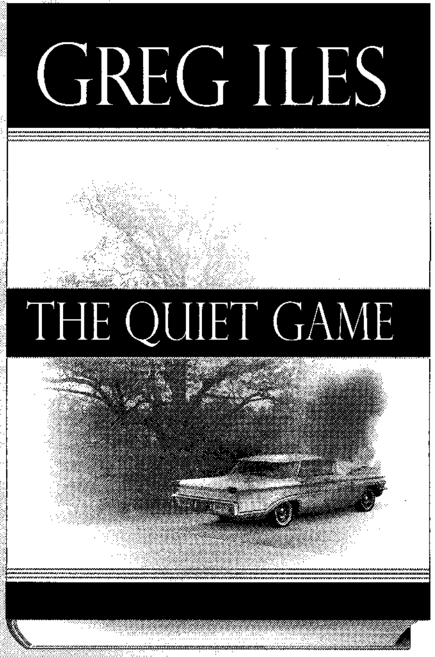


Dutton

efforts: with Francesco Clemente, Jim Dine, Donald Sultan, Alex Katz, John Chamberlain, Susan Rothenberg, Joe Brainard, R. B. Kitaj, Sol LeWitt, Robert Indiana, and Georg Baselitz, to name just the artists. Opens Sept. 13. . . . ¶ "Such Friends," an exhibit that takes its title from a W. B. Yeats couplet ("Think where man's glory most begins and ends / And say my glory was I had such friends"), draws a rich bibliographical portrait of the Irish poet's impressively complicated social and literary life. On display are manuscripts and typescripts, often covered with Yeats's tireless corrections; inscribed editions of his poems; correspondence; and portraits by the poet's father and brother, both painters. Also included are volumes and letters by Maud Gonne, Lady Gregory, Ezra Pound, J. M. Synge, James Joyce, and others. Just skimming through this wealth of material can be exhilarating. Horseman, stop by! Through Sept. 11. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St. (864-4500)—On the first floor, works by sixteen of the nearly ninety artists who have passed through the museum's artists-in-residence program are on display. The strongest tend to be by recent alumni, including such well-known younger artists as Leonardo Drew, Alison Saar, and Nari Ward. Over all, sculpture predominates, and the influence of Frank Stella, at a low ebb in the rest of the art world, proves unexpectedly pervasive here. The second-floor exhibition, "From the Studio"—more aptly titled "Flip, Funk, and Fantasy" in the catalogue essay—showcases work by this year's three resident artists. Manuel Acevedo makes printed flip books in which his own haiku gradually appear. Elia Alba arranges thousands of muslin baby booties into geometric patterns. Xenobia Bailey (the funk element of the trio) offers a sloppy, wacky installation, less professional than the other two, but more engaging. Titled "Paradise Under Reconstruction: A Cosmic Moonlodge," it features an altar full of incense and feathers, a seven-foot-tall mannequin based on African totems, and a wall of brilliantly colored crocheted disks, as dizzying as they are delightful. Through Oct. 3. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

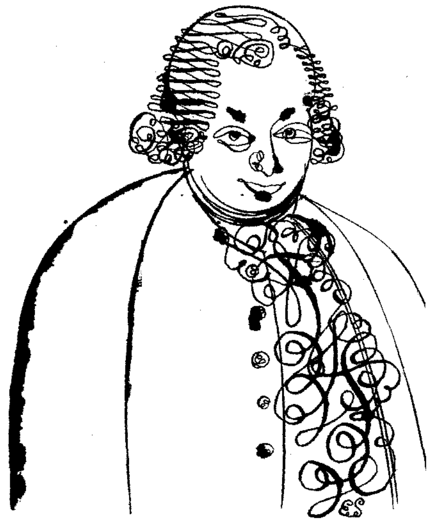
GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

James Lee Byars (1932-97)—Equal parts shaman and charlatan, this Detroit-born artist developed a precious, Zen-like style of artmaking that calls out for a Mike Myers parody. In his seventies heyday, Byars liked to appear in a gold suit, reciting gnomic phrases and distributing tiny slips of paper. (For one exhibition, he stood silently in front of the Guggenheim Museum, holding a gold disk that read "Do Not Touch This Holy Building.") The two sculptures here, sitting in a bare room, are characteristic. The more flamboyant, "The Rose Table of Perfect," is a sphere composed of three thousand three hundred and thirty-three long-stemmed roses. Over the course of the exhibition, the roses gradually wither and die, becoming either a metaphor or simply a vast ball of potpourri. Through Sept. 26. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays.)

Anne and Patrick Poirier / Tom Sachs—Shattering glass, bullet-ridden bodies, and flashes of hard-core pornography are not what one ordinarily associates with Montblanc, the German firm that manufactures luxurious writing instruments. On the second floor of Montblanc's flagship store, however, a "De-Acceleration Studio" has been equipped with exhibition spaces for video and installation art, along with jewelry, writing accessories, and complimentary postal service. The inaugural art works veer in two directions. The Poiriers' contribution, a vast bronze shield titled "Anima Mundi," is stately and dull. Sachs's "Burn Baby Burn," on the other hand, is exuberantly abrasive. Along with foam-core spaceship models and graffiti, two video monitors display a thirty-minute loop of mass-media mayhem. A minute or two of this induces a guilty euphoria; a few more minutes, however, and the thought of "de-accelerating"—perhaps by writing a long civilized letter to an old friend—begins to seem powerfully alluring. All you need is the right pen. Through Dec. 31. (Montblanc, 834 Madison Ave., at 69th St. 535-6061.)

RISING SON: *When the Queen's Chamber Band decided to devote its September 14 concert at Merkin Concert Hall to the music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, it could not have imagined that the second son of Johann Sebastian would be making headlines. It turns out that the younger Bach's musical estate, long feared lost or destroyed, resides in a collection that the Russians removed from Berlin during the Second World War, first to Silesia and then to Kiev, where it has been stashed away for decades. This summer, Ukrainian officials allowed leading Bach and "war trophy" scholars their first glimpse of the archive, which includes more than five thousand items. Approximately a tenth of these relate to members of the Bach family, including at least a hundred unpublished manuscripts of works by C. P. E. Bach himself. The discovery, which is of immense musicological importance, may provide the push needed to convince a wide public of what connoisseurs already know—that C. P. E. Bach belongs on the "A list" of composers, which is where such admirers as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven invariably ranked him.*



ELVIS SWIFT

"New New York"—From James Polshek's playful printing plant for the New York *Times* out in Queens to Rafael Viñoly's crisp, handsome Housing Court in the Bronx, this lively exhibition highlights some recent architectural projects that Manhattan-bound New Yorkers might otherwise miss. The seven projects (five are built or under construction) all represent ambitious commissions. Of the two unbuilt ones, Jean Nouvel's scheme for a hotel and marina complex on the Brookyln waterfront looks brash and exciting; the hotel itself cantilevers out over the East River, like a subway car overshooting a trestle. Peter Eisenman's proposal for the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, on the other hand, belongs to an ominous new wave—namely, the approaching tsunami of Frank Gehry knockoffs. Through Sept. 22. (Architectural League of New York, 457 Madison Ave., at 50th St. 753-1722.)

Season Openers—**DEBRA BERMINGHAM** and **PAUL WONNER,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Both shows open Sept. 9. . . . **HERMAN BRAUN-VEGA,** Haime, 41 E. 57th St. 888-3550. Open Mondays; opens Sept. 7. . . . **GRISHA BRUSKIN** and **MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays; both shows open Sept. 14. . . . **LUISA CALDWELL,** Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. 879-3500. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **BEAUFORD DELANEY** and **HAROLD COUSINS,** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082. Both shows open Sept. 9. . . . **SIMON DINNERSTEIN,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. 644-8300. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **HOLLY LANE,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Opens Sept. 8. . . . **ELIE NADELMAN,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; opens Sept. 7. . . . **MARK PODWAL,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **TOM SACHS,** Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Opens Sept. 10. (See also show at Montblanc, above.) . . . **JACQUES VILLEGLÉ,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Opens Sept. 14. . . . **HENRY WARD,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Opens Sept. 9.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Group Show—Robert Gober, renowned for his creepy and melancholic sculptures of drains, sinks, and urinals, among other symbolically charged talismans of the home and of everyday life, has organized a group exhibition that speaks strongly to his own preoccupations. The show is very much an installation, with unusually dim lighting and the grating noise of a saw (it's the audio track from "Spiked Buck," Robert Beck's video of someone insistently sawing the antlers from a decapitated stag). Through Cady Noland's cheaply fabricated, abstract stocks (the instrument of corporal punishment, not the corporate share), one catches glimpses of Anni Albers's exquisite gray-and-white Bauhaus textile grid. On facing walls, Gober has installed Joan Semel's large-scale paintings of nude couples; in certain paintings, the lovers display a pronounced pallor, as if they had been laid out on mortuary slabs rather than on beds. In the back gallery, Nancy Shaver's series of black-and-white photographs (1975-77) of found pieces of children's clothing has a hapless, forlorn air. Gober's show is without a doubt the most ambitious group exhibition of the summer: Welcome to the House of Dispassionate Horrors. Through Sept. 10. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200.)

Season Openers—**HANS ACCOLA,** Eller, 529 W. 20th St. 206-6411. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **CÉLESTE BOURSIER-MOUGENOT,** Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **TILL FREIWALD,** Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **TOM GREGG,** Billis, 526 W. 26th St. 645-2621. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **WILLIAM L. HAWKINS,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **CLAIRE JERVERT,** Martz, 529 W. 20th St. 206-3686. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **SUSANNE KÜHN,** Maynes, 529

W. 20th St. 741-3318. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **OMAR LOPEZ-CHAHOUD,** DeChiara Stewart, 521 W. 26th St. 967-6007. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **GILES LYON,** Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **HOLLY MILLER,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **STEVEN PARRINO,** Team, 527 W. 26th St. 279-9219. Through Oct. 2. . . . **ALDO ROSSI,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Opens Sept. 11. . . . **ANDREAS SLOMINSKI,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Opens Sept. 11. . . . **JOSEPH STASHKEVETCH,** Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **SU-EN WONG,** Stux, 529 W. 20th St. 352-1600. Opens Sept. 9.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

RON BARON—The approximately seventy figures of "Birds," all made from Nova Scotian lobster buoys, look at home on the pilings at the west end of Canal Street. From inside the bay of the newly whitewashed Pier 34, the sculptor's tribute to Brancusi's "Bird in Space" emerges to varying degrees, depending on the tide, and echoes both the skyline behind and the grassy, ruined docks still hovering nearby, while providing the occasional haven for shorebirds. Through late fall. (Pier 34, Hudson River at Canal St. For more information, call the Public Art Fund at 980-4575.)

"BEE HIVE"—Outside Shakespeare's Fulcrum, Robert du Grenier has unwittingly created a bit of performance-art buzz with a glass beehive (located in the gallery, but equipped with a special street-entry tube on Broome Street). Though the bees can't get into the gallery proper, the apian activity has caused problems for neighbors and for construction workers on a nearby scaffold. That is why, on a recent afternoon, you could find gallery owner Valerie Shakespeare and a male accomplice in a black mesh fedora swatting drones as they emerged from a silver ventilating tube (when lost and disoriented, the bees can turn violent). Fans of live installation might recall the Tilton Gallery's Xu Bing exhibition last season, which was cut short when the staff got tired of cleaning up pig droppings. Through Sept. 19. (Shakespeare's Fulcrum, 480 Broome St. 966-6848.)

"DIE BÜCHER DER KÜNSTLER"—Two ever-prominent sides of the German psyche, order and rebellion, are amusingly joined in this survey, which collects examples of artist's books published in Germany over the past thirty years. The presentation is Teutonically thorough: six hundred and fifty-one books, by two hundred and thirty-nine artists, housed in Plexiglas vitrines and organized by category ("Painters and Drawers," "Researchers and Collectors," etc.). The books tend to be casually jokey, chaotic, and self-indulgent. Dieter Roth, for example, fills volume after volume with cursory scribbles, one to a page. For devotees of the genre, this is a bibliographical feast. For the rest of us, it has the look of a compulsively tidy stoop sale. Through Sept. 18. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. 925-4338.)

"SPATIAL INTEREST"—Dutifully addressing themselves to the bland environment of the law office in which this group show takes place, the five artists involved have created various site-specific installations. Even the best of them, James Carl's filing-cabinet façades and Arnold Helbling's mural of airbrushed bookshelves, bespeak a spirit of due diligence rather than inspiration. Site specificity has generally worked out better in theory than in practice; here one can't help wishing that the artists had jettisoned it altogether. Through Oct. 2. (The Work Space, 96 Spring St. 219-2790.)

SEASON OPENERS—**KAREN ARM** and **BRETT REICHMAN,** P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Both shows open Sept. 9. . . . **KARIN BATTEN,** June Kelly, 591 Broadway. 226-1660. Through Sept. 28. . . . **CEAL FLOYER,** Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **SHIRAZEH HOUSHIARY,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Opens Sept. 8. . . . **KATURAH HUTCHESON,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **OLIVIER MOSSET,** Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. 334-3455. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **JOHN SINGER SARGENT,** Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 100 Washington Sq. E. 998-6780. Through Oct. 30. . . . **PETER SCHROTH,** Bodell 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820. Open noon to 7; opens Sept. 9. . . . **NOT VITAL,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Opens Sept. 8. . . . **HEE YOUNG-RYU,** Wickiser, 568 Broadway. 941-1817. Through Sept. 16.

AUCTIONS

SOTHEBY'S—The auction season begins with an emphasis on Asian art, including numerous pieces being deaccessioned by the Cleveland Museum of Art. Sept. 13: Korean art works, including a variety of Koryo celadon pieces. . . . ¶ Sept. 14: Two sessions devoted to Japanese works. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

DOYLE—A sale of Korean and Chinese decorative works and Japanese paintings. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Sept. 13.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

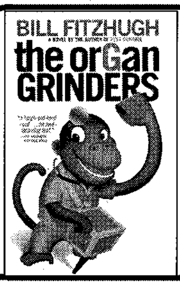
"FEMALE"—Another gender-based group show curated by Vince Aletti. Among the dozens of artists on view are Marianne Courville, Bruce Cratsley, John Dugdale, Mitch Epstein, Emmet Gowin, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Vik Muniz, and Rosalind Solomon. Opens Sept. 9. (Wessel and O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. 242-8811. Open Sundays.)

"FIVE FROM EUROPE"—Works by Frantisek Drtikol, Roman Vishniac, Brassaï, Bill Brandt, and Robert Frank. Through Oct. 16. (Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY—"Sea Change: The Seascape in Contemporary Photography." Through Sept. 26. . . . ¶ "Myths, Dreams, and Realities in Contemporary Argentine Photography." Through Sept. 26. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

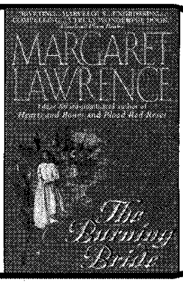
ON SEPTEMBER 9, 1841, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, A HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING MATCH LASTED MORE THAN 100 ROUNDS.

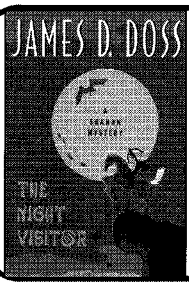
CHECK OUT THESE LITERARY KNOCKOUTS.



The Organ Grinders
Bill Fitzhugh
"A laugh-out-loud read."
—*The Washington Post Book World*
What do you get when you cross a tree-hugger, a moneygrubber with a rare disease, a cross-species organ transplant, a vengeful eco-terrorist, and a pack of 50,000 enormous baboons? One outrageous, sidesplitting novel!

The Burning Bride
Margaret Lawrence
"A terrific novel."—Diana Gabaldon, author of *Drums of Autumn*
"Riveting...marvelous."—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*
The Edgar and Agatha Award–nominated author of *Hearts and Bones* brings you a novel of an eighteenth-century woman who must track down a killer before her lover takes the blame for a murder he didn't commit.





The Night Visitor
A Shaman Mystery
James D. Doss
"Fans of Tony Hillerman's Navajo mysteries will find a new home here."—*Denver Post*
The newest novel in the critically acclaimed Shaman series brings back Charlie Moon to investigate a startling discovery—the bones of a gargantuan, prehistoric beast believed to inspire evil deeds.

COMING THIS OCTOBER: *Faded Coat of Blue*
from author Owen Parry. A novel of greed, corruption, and murder set during the American Civil War.
For a free copy, be one of the first 100 to sign up at www.avonbooks.com/readers

AVON BOOKS
A HarperCollins Company

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Bill Brandt: A Retrospective." Through Oct. 31. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Season Openers—**jennifer bolande**, Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 19th St. 367-7474. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **alvin booth**, Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **elinor carucci**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **mitch epstein**, Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 929-2262. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **adam fuss**, Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **maria martinez-cañas**, Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **richard misrach**, Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600. Opens Sept. 8. . . . **yasumasa morimura**, Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **irving penn**, Pace Wildenstein (through Sept. 25) and Pace-MacGill (opens Sept. 9), both at 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. . . . **alison rossiter**, Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Opens Sept. 8. . . . **collier schorr**, 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **nancy shaver**, Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **hiroshi sunairi**, Kreps, 520 W. 20th St. 741-8849. Opens Sept. 11.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, theAmerican Museum of Natural History, and the Museum of the City of New York.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

New York City Opera—Opening performances of the fall season, which continues through Nov. 21. Sept. 11 at 8: "Madama Butterfly.". . . ¶ Sept. 12 at 1:30: "The Magic Flute," performed in English. . . . ¶ Sept. 14 at 6:30: A new production of Rossini's "Il Viaggio a Reims," a sort of eighteen-twenties foreshadowing of "Grand Hotel." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Harmonia Opera Company—Founded eighteen years ago to advance cultural rapprochement between the United States and Japan, this company has made a specialty of presenting American audiences with operas that portray aspects of Japanese culture. Here it offers a fully staged production of "Amanjaku and Princess Uriko," an operatic setting, by the modern composer Hikaru Hayashi, of a folktale about a thwarted kidnapping. James Demster conducts a cast that includes the august soprano Lucine Amara and the baritone Dennis McVeigh. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. Sept. 13 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 870-1500.)

ORCHESTRAS

Manhattan Chamber Sinfonia—Glen Barton Cortese conducts Peter Schickele's Concerto for Chamber Orchestra, Weber's Clarinet Concerto No. 2 (featuring Ricardo Morales), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Sept. 11 at 8. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Sept. 12 at 3.)

RECITALS

Midday in Midtown—This week, the busy St. Francis of Assisi Church inaugurates "Midtown Concerts: Music for the Spirit," a new lunchtime series of forty-minute concerts, every Thursday, for music lovers in the region of Penn Station. In the opening recital, Gwendolyn Toth, the church's music director, offers an all-Bach program that includes the "Italian" Concerto and excerpts from the "Goldberg" Variations, performing on a lautenwerk, an obscure eighteenth-century keyboard instrument whose gut and brass strings provide an unusual range of tonal color. (135 W. 31st St. Sept. 9 at 1:15. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Moszkowski's Suite in G Minor (Op. 71), Glazunov's String Quintet (Op. 39), and Franck's Piano Quintet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Sept. 9 at 7:30 and Sept. 12 at 4.)

Leodigario del Rosario—Tenor, performing works by Strauss, Mozart, Bernstein, and others, with pianist Regalado José assisting. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 11 at 2.)

"Sundays on the Island"—Brahms's String Sextet No. 1 is performed in the music cottage of this way-uptown site. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Sept. 12 at noon.)

Bachmann-Klibonoff-Fridman Trio—The ensemble plays piano trios by Haydn (in G Major, Hob. XV:25, the "Gypsy Rondo"), Mendelssohn (in C Minor), and Chopin. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Sept. 12 at 3.)

The Queen's Chamber Band—In this concert dedicated to the emotionally potent music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Elaine Comparone plays a group of his solo-harpsichord pieces, and is joined by her colleagues for variously constituted chamber works, including a sonata for oboe and obbligato harpsichord, a trio sonata, a flute quartet, and several of his "Geistliche Lieder." A particular curiosity among the offerings is his C-Minor Keyboard Fantasia, presented (as the poet Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg suggested, in the seventeen-sixties) in juxtaposition with the "To be, or not to be" soliloquy from "Hamlet" to create a proto-Romantic melodrama. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Sept. 14 at 8.)

Rajan Krishnaswami—Cellist, assisted by pianist Mark Salman, offering a program that includes Beethoven's F-Major Cello Sonata, Janáček's "Pohádka," Liszt's "Élégie," and the première of David Stock's "Refuge." (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 14 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

Music Mountain—In the final concert of the festival's season, Baroque flutist John Solum is joined by seven period-instrument-playing colleagues in an all-Bach concert that includes the B-Minor Flute Sonata, a pair of trio sonatas, and the "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 5. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. Sept. 12 at 3.)

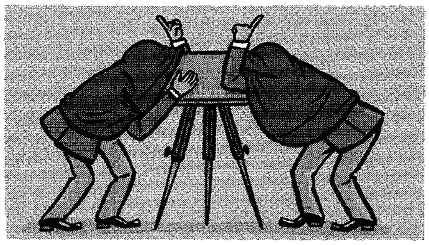
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Readings—Sept. 8 at 7: By novelist Donald Antrim, from his work. (Posman Books, 9 Grand Central Terminal. 983-1111.) . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 7: By Jhumpa Lahiri, from her short-story collection, "Interpreter of Maladies." (Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 8: By Jonathan Lethem, from his novel "Motherless Brooklyn," Ken Foster, from his short-story collection, "The Kind I'm Likely to Get," and Sheila Kohler, from her novel "Cracks." (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 14 at 7:30: By Claire Messud, from her novel "The Last Life." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 82nd St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Sept. 9 at 6: Historian Jill Ker Conway interviews Esmeralda Santiago, author of the memoir "When I Was Puerto Rican." (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Sept. 12 at 2: Phyllis Magidson, co-curator of "Fashion on Stage," at the Museum of the City of New York, discusses Broadway and couture. (Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 534-1672.) . . . ¶ Sept. 14 at 7: Jazz writer Nat Hentoff moderates a panel discussion about Duke Ellington's discography with two of Ellington's producers, George Avakian and Teo Macero. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 875-5599.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Photo Ops



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

When American daguerreotypes were shown at the Great Exhibition in London, in 1851, the European judges, taken aback by "their beauty of execution," tried to imply that their quality was due more to the climate of the United States than to the prowess of its citizens. But John Wood, the editor of **America and the Daguerreotype** (Iowa), thinks that Americans achieved superiority through well-run studios and a desire to make ordinary people look heroic. His anthology is filled with pictures of matrons, militiamen, cigar-makers, families, and even dead children. The newborn photography craze grew when a cheaper, easier alternative to the daguerreotype and the glass negative came on the market—the tintype, which recorded images on a thin metal sheet. **The American Tintype** (Ohio State), by Floyd and Marion Rinhart and Robert W. Wagner, examines how the speed of the new process produced a less formal shot and hence a livelier view of American life—an impression borne out by the many images of Sunday-afternoon strollers, bicyclists, and beachgoers.

Like any good mania, photography had its share of detractors. **Positive Pleasures: Early Photography and Humor** (Penn State), by Heinz and Bridget Henisch, shows that cartoonists, in particular, loved to ridicule the new medium. One *Punch* cartoon from 1863 shows a prudent spinster who, upon hearing that her image will be inverted on the focussing plate, has anxiously tied her skirt around her ankles so that it won't fly up over her head.

Americans now take seventeen billion snapshots a year, according to Keith Davis, the director of the Hallmark Photographic Collection and author of the new, enlarged edition of **An American Century of Photography** (Abrams). In this history—which details trends of abstraction and realism, technical advances, and key phases in photojournalism and fashion photography—Davis casts the amateur as a driving force in the evolution of photographic technique. Images by one enthusiast, Henry N. Cady, include an 1887 landscape that was shot—in perhaps the earliest telephoto effect—through his opera glasses.

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

Novel Voices

MY SISTER FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

by Laurie Fox

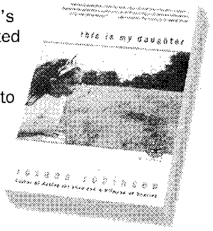
MY SISTER from the BLACK LAGOON
laurie fox

With a Rita Hayworth look-alike mother, a TV studio accountant father and a certifiable sister, Lorna can't even relate to her Barbie doll. Off-kilter humor carries Lorna through years of teenage angst, self-discovery and, ultimately, sweet resolution with her crazy sister.
(Scribner Paperback Fiction)

Pub. Price: $13.00 Discount **10%**
Our Price: $11.70

THIS IS MY DAUGHTER

by Roxana Robinson

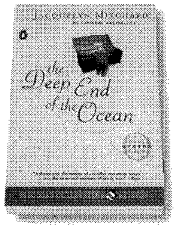


Despite their privileged lives, Peter and Emma's new union is shaken by the complexities created by children from their previous marriages. In a highly-praised work of fiction, the author of *Summer Light* offers compassionate insight into a modern family.
(Scribner Paperback Fiction)

Pub. Price: $13.00 Discount **10%**
Our Price: $11.70

THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN

by Jacquelyn Mitchard

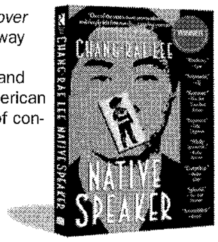


In a single, unguarded instant, Beth Cappadora's life is changed forever when her three-year-old son Ben vanishes from a crowded hotel lobby. So begins a heart-wrenching story about the ultimate testing of the ties that bind people together. A #1 *New York Times* bestseller, this novel will touch you to the core.
(Penguin)

Pub. Price: $12.95 Discount **10%**
Our Price: $11.65
On sale October 4th.

NATIVE SPEAKER

by Chang-rae Lee



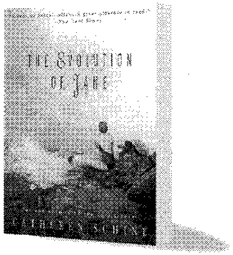
Winner of the 1995 Barnes & Noble *Discover Great New Writers* Award and the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award, Lee's first novel explores the boundaries between culture and identity. Straddling two worlds, Korean-American CIA operative Henry Parks faces a crisis of conscience that affects his entire life.
(Riverhead Books)

Pub. Price: $12.95 Discount **10%**
Our Price: $11.65

DISCOVER
GREAT·NEW·WRITERS

THE EVOLUTION OF JANE

by Cathleen Schine

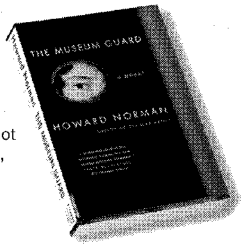


Traveling to the Galapagos Islands to recover from a divorce, Jane Barlow Schwartz meets up with her childhood best friend. Against a backdrop of natural history and quirky characters, Jane tries to pinpoint the reason for their friendship's demise and the deeper issues at play.
(Plume)

Pub. Price: $12.95 Discount **10%**
Our Price: $11.65

THE MUSEUM GUARD

by Howard Norman



The author of *The Bird Artist* returns with a spellbinding book in which history, art and romance collide. A Jewish girl's obsession with a Dutch painting has her believing that she is its subject and must fulfill a destiny not her own. As her friends attempt to intervene, she spirals toward destruction.
(Picador)

Pub. Price: $14.00 Discount **10%**
Our Price: $12.60

EUCALYPTUS

by Murray Bail

EUCALYPTUS
MURRAY BAIL

Any man who wants to marry widower Holland's beautiful daughter must first name the species of every eucalyptus tree on his sprawling property. As suitors come and go, Ellen takes notice of one handsome young man whose tales of adventure lure the couple into an increasingly erotic love story of their own.
(Harvest)

Pub. Price: $13.00 Discount **10%**
Our Price: $11.70

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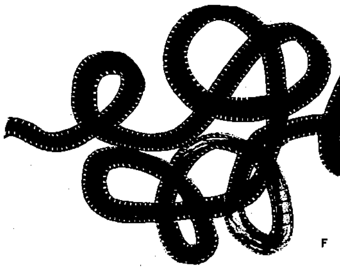
THE MOVIES



OPENING

Best Laid Plans—A thriller, with Alessandro Nivola, Reese Witherspoon, and Josh Brolin; directed by Mike Barker. Opening Sept. 10. (First & 62nd Cinemas and Union Square.)

Black Cat, White Cat—A comedy about rival Gypsy patriarchs and their families. Directed by Emir Kusturica. In Serbo-Croatian and Romany. Opening Sept. 10. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

B. Monkey—A love story about a woman with a criminal past (Asia Argento) and the schoolteacher who loves her (Jared Harris). Directed by Michael Radford. Opening Sept. 10. (Angelika Film Center.)

Earth—The second part of Deepa Mehta's planned trilogy (the first was "Fire"; the third will be "Water") is a love story set in India in 1947. Opening Sept. 10. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

I Woke Up Early the Day I Died—An adventure film, based on a screenplay by Edward D. Wood, Jr., with Billy Zane. Directed by Aris Iliopulos. Opening Sept. 10. (The Screening Room.)

Love Stinks—A romantic comedy, written and directed by Jeff Franklin. With French Stewart, Bridgette Wilson, Bill Bellamy, and Tyra Banks. Opening Sept. 10. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Union Square, and Waverly.)

Lucinda's Spell—Jon Jacobs's comedy about witches. Opening Sept. 10. (Village East Cinemas.)

Stigmata—A drama about a priest (Gabriel Byrne) who is dispatched by the Vatican to verify the supernatural experiences of a young woman (Patricia Arquette). Directed by Rupert Wainwright. Opening Sept. 10. (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Olympia, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly.)

Stir of Echoes—A supernatural thriller, based on Richard Matheson's novel. Directed by David Koepp, with Kevin Bacon, Kathryn Erbe, and Illeana Douglas. Opening Sept. 10. (84th Street Sixplex and Union Square.)

Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald—A comedy about the production of a live Japanese radio drama. Directed by Koki Mitani. In Japanese. Opening Sept. 8. (Film Forum.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

After Life—Newly dead people assemble in a kind of limbo (it looks like an old school) and are asked to choose a single memory of happiness. A celestial film crew then makes a movie of that moment, and the shade is allowed to live with the memory for all eternity. In this sombre, delicate Japanese fantasy, written and directed by Kore-eda Hirokazu (a former documentary-maker), the light is gray and even, the emotions tranquil, the politeness exquisite. Hirokazu has no interest in orgiasts or roller-coaster riders: the cherished moment, it turns out, may be nothing more than a passing mood of pleasure—a breeze felt at a window—or a pleasure given rather than one received. In Japanese.—*David Denby* (Art Greenwich Twin.)

American Pie—Four senior boys at a Michigan high school decide to end their status as virgins and undergo various erotic adventures—some ridiculous or humiliating, some gratifying—which they then relate to one another. The writer, Adam Herz, and the team of Paul and Chris Weitz (the first directs, the second produces) aim low and score. "American Pie" is often funny, but you may come out depressed by it. The coarseness in itself is not offensive, but the notion that privacy couldn't possibly be a value that matters to anyone is.—*D.D.* (7/12/99) (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, and Union Square.)

Back Street (1932)—Irene Dunne does the suffering in this version of the Fannie Hurst classic weeper about a woman who loves a selfish married man (John Boles) and spends her whole life in the shadow of his. Hurst had a shameful genius for this sort of muck. John M. Stahl directed, and the great Karl Freund did the cinematography.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 14.)

The Blair Witch Project—A cunningly conceived and crafted exercise in suggestibility and terror. A student film crew goes out into the Maryland woods, attempting to record traces of a predatory witch who has, according to legend, held sway in the area for two hundred years. What we see is presented to us as the remnants of the project after the crew has disappeared. The footage has the haphazard continuity of tormented fragments; it's all handheld stuff, caught on the run. The documentary project is, of course, fiction, created by five film nuts from Orlando, headed by Eduardo Sanchez and Dan Myrick. In black-and-white and color.—*D.D.* (7/26/99) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, and State.)

Bowfinger—Bobby Bowfinger (Steve Martin) is a small-time movie producer in Los Angeles who grabs at one last chance: he decides to make a movie without informing the star—Kit Ramsey (Eddie Murphy), at once the most heavily protected and most uncontrolled actor in Hollywood. It's a great conceit, and it flows naturally into a series of turbid set pieces, as Bowfinger and his fellow-hopefuls (played with a will by Christine Baranski and Heather Graham, among others) lure the hapless Kit into scenes that will (a) cause him to react like an action hero, and (b) drive him crazy. The climax feels a little undernourished, but Martin's comedy (he wrote the script) is so genial, and is directed at such a gallop by Frank Oz, that you can forgive it almost anything.—*Anthony Lane* (8/16/99) (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Buena Vista Social Club—In 1996, the blues guitarist Ry Cooder gathered together some wonderful Cuban musicians in their seventies and eighties for a successful recording project. Two years later, Cooder went back to Cuba, this time accompanied by cameras and the German director Wim Wenders, seeking out the men and women of Cuban music on the streets and in the old dance halls of Havana. The musicians still look great, play beautifully, and exude a stirring seriousness and dignity; the movie comes closer to pure happiness than anything else in the theatres at the moment.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Cameraman (1928)—It's a romantic charmer—the exhilarating first product of Buster Keaton's ultimately calamitous turn from independent production to studio work at M-G-M. Keaton plays a lowly tintype photographer who transforms himself into a newsreel ace to win over the office girl at the studio's New York newsreel department. Keaton proves his genius at creating a parabolalike farce with what looks like a series of straight lines, whether he's calling his true love and then racing across town to see her before she realizes that he's off the phone or keeping his tripod level during a tong war by evening it out with flying bullets. Under the direction of his old vaudeville buddy Edward M. Sedgwick, Jr., Keaton gets marvellous support from a cast that includes Marceline Day (the girl), Edward Brophy (a man in a cramped changing stall), and Josephine (an amazing performing monkey).—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 13.)

Chill Factor—An action thriller, with Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Skeet Ulrich, directed by Hugh Johnson. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and Union Square.)

Deep Blue Sea—A degraded cross between "Jaws" and "Frankenstein." Medical researchers, with the best intentions, create super-intelligent sharks, which then turn their teeth on the scientists. Scary, absurd, inessential. The disgraceful script is by Duncan Kennedy, Donna Powers, and Wayne Powers. Directed with occasional flashes of nasty wit by Renny Harlin.—*D.D.* (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Dinner Game—Francis Veber's movie sounds disappointingly courteous; the original French title, "Le Dîner de Cons," is much ruder and certainly closer to the misanthropic spirit of this farce. The premise is as entertaining as you could hope for: every Wednesday, a bunch of smart young Parisians hold a dinner, to which each of them must invite a complete idiot. In this case, Pierre (Thierry Lhermitte) is delighted with his latest catch, Pignon (Jacques Villeret), a spherical buffoon whose principal talent is for making models out of matchsticks. Needless to say, Pierre's plan stumbles when Pignon offers to help him sort out his life. No one could claim that the film is a distinguished contribution to cinema, but it would be churlish to resist its geniality and speed. In French.—*A.L.* (Paris.)

La Grande Illusion (1937)—The original negative of Jean Renoir's heartbreaking classic set in a German prison camp during the First World War has recently been restored, and the new prints are a revelation—the natural light in the outdoor scenes is beautiful, the little prison-camp entertainment show glows, the sound is clear and detailed. The movie remains as stirring and sweet-souled as ever. In French.—*D.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

The Lady Eve (1941)—A frivolous masterpiece. Like "Bringing Up Baby," "The Lady Eve" is a mixture of visual and verbal slapstick, and of high artifice and pratfalls. Barbara Stanwyck keeps sticking out a sensational leg, and Henry Fonda keeps tripping over it. She's a cardsharp, and he's a millionaire scientist who knows more about snakes than about women; neither performer has ever been funnier. The film, based on a story by Monckton Hoffe, and with screenplay and direction by Preston Sturges, is full of classic moments and classic lines; it represents the dizzy high point of Sturges's comedy writing.—*P.K.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Sept. 12.)

Marcello Mastroianni: I Remember (1997)—A beguiling memoir. The style is discursive, not dramatic, but how better to while away three hours than in the company of the most debonair man in movie history? His remembrances of fifty years of filmmaking are so perceptively relaxed that they seem to engage you directly in a posthumous conversation. Anna Maria Tatò interviewed Mastroianni and directed the film. In Italian.—*M.S.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Mickey Blue Eyes—Michael (Hugh Grant), a polite Englishman working in New York, falls in love with Gina (Jeanne Tripplehorn), the daughter of a soldier in a Mafia family, which proceeds to get its hooks very deep into Michael. It's a good comic premise, but the screenwriters, Adam Scheinman and Robert Kuhn, and the director, Kelly Makin, can't liberate the jokes from an excessively complicated plot. Tripplehorn is too earnest for comedy, and Grant isn't used very well—the whole bit about his attempt to pronounce “Fuhgeddaboudit” is feeble, rather than funny. As aging Mafiosi, James Caan and Burt Young, both underacting, have some wonderful moments.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ Astor Plaza; through Sept. 9.)

Mr. Hulot's Holiday (1953)—People are at their most desperate when they're working at enjoying themselves; it is Jacques Tati's peculiar comic triumph to have caught the ghastliness of a summer vacation at the beach. Fortunately, his technique is light and dry slapstick; the chronicle of human foibles and frustrations never sinks to the moist or the lovable. As director, co-author, and star, Tati is sparse, eccentric, quick. It is not until afterward—with the sweet, nostalgic music lingering—that these misadventures may take on a certain depth and poignancy. In French.—*P.K.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Sept. 9.)

The Muse—One of the daughters of Zeus (Sharon Stone) helps a Hollywood screenwriter (Albert Brooks) regain his creativity. Also with Jeff Bridges and Andie MacDowell; directed by Brooks. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (East 85th Street, Guild, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

Outside Providence—The coming-of-age story of a boy from a blue-collar neighborhood who's sent to prep school. Based on a novel by Peter Farrelly, directed by Michael Corrente. (Cinema II, East 86th Street Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

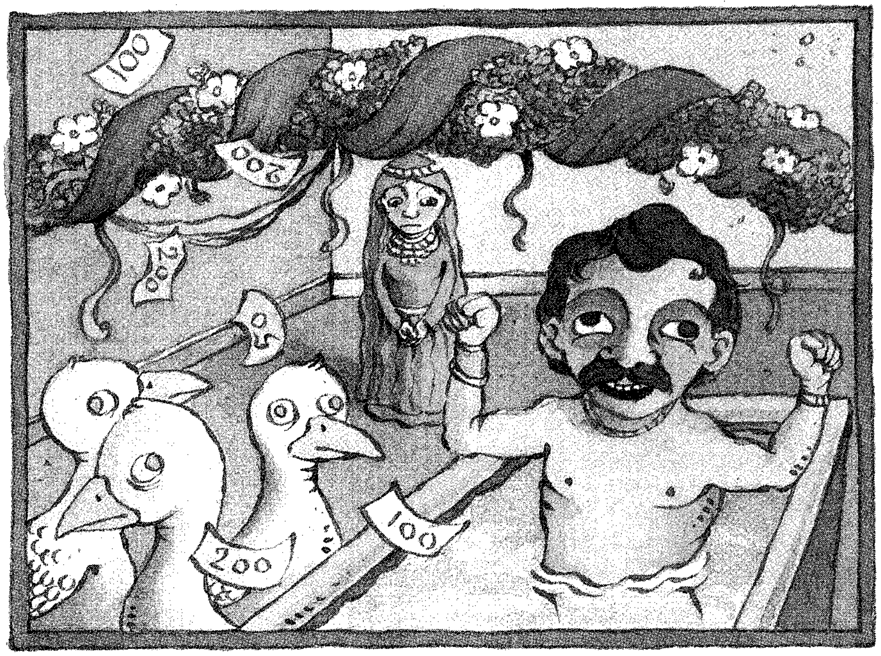
The Pink Panther (1964)—The first in the series of Blake Edwards comedies featuring Peter Sellers' maladroit Inspector Clouseau has a surprisingly cosmopolitan blend of caper, cuckoldry, and pratfalls. Both Sir Charles Lytton (David Niven)—who is also the notorious jewel thief the Phantom—and Lytton's con-artist nephew (Robert Wagner) woo Clouseau's wife (Capucine) while the inspector is trying to prevent the theft of the fabulous Pink Panther diamond; by the end, even the gem's owner, the exotic Princess Darla (Claudia Cardinale), is conspiring against him. Clouseau, however, proves clumsy and unsinkable: he's the archetypal man of injured dignity who won't acknowledge the injury.—*M.S.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 12.)

The Red Violin—Joshua Bell's impassioned violin soars above a dark matting of strings in John Corigliano's soundtrack score—the most valuable element to emerge from this grandiose French-Canadian project, an omnibus film that chronicles the life of a great violin made in Cremona in the late seventeenth century. Unfortunately, the director-screenwriter team, François Girard and Don McKellar, don't seem to have worked out a coherent idea of what the violin means to each of its owners.—*D.D.* (6/14/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Runaway Bride—A rumpled and eccentric romantic comedy with a fluctuating pulse and more odd corners than a rural junk shop. Julia Roberts is a bolter—a girl unsure of her identity, who keeps running away from men at the altar—and Richard Gere, who has developed a new, becomingly wistful manner, is a sardonic New York newspaper columnist who shows up in Roberts's small Maryland town to turn her story into news. The two are drawn together by self-dissatisfaction and bafflement. Garry Marshall, who directed, takes his time exploring the town, and the movie that results is poky but often charming.—*D.D.* (8/9/99) (Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

Run Lola Run—Lola (Franka Potente), a ferociously willful punk girl with red hair, has twenty minutes to come up with a hundred thousand marks and save her hapless boyfriend, Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu), from the wrath of a big-time Berlin gangster. The writer-director, Tom Tykwer, shows us one version of what happens, and then he gives us two others, each of which takes off from the initial circumstances but has the characters make different decisions along the way, producing different climaxes. The action of the movie is rush, rush, rush, but the effect is contemplative, almost metaphysical. In German.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas.)

The Sixth Sense—A delicate, emotionally attentive, but very scary ghost story. In a Philadelphia drained of color and life, a shrink (Bruce Willis) who specializes in childhood anxieties becomes obsessed with one of his patients, a suffering nine-year-old boy (Haley Joel Osment) who “sees” dead people. The movie, written and directed by the young, Indian-born M. Night Shyamalan, consists mostly of long conversations between Willis, who is usually silent and very patient, and Osment, who may be an acting genius. Osment has the terrified face of an orphaned child of war; he is very moving. Despite an occasional hackneyed moment and too much of John Newton Howard's overbearing music, the movie is an admirable attempt at injecting some honest feeling into a curdled commercial genre, and it pays off in the end with a genuine shock that leaves one amazed. With Olivia Williams as the doctor's wife and Toni Collette, whose face often mirrors Osment's, as the little boy's loving but baffled mother. Tak Fujimoto did the somberly beautiful cinematography.—*D.D.* (8/23-30/99) (Cinema I, Criterion Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)



Opening Sept. 10, Emir Kusturica's “Black Cat, White Cat.”

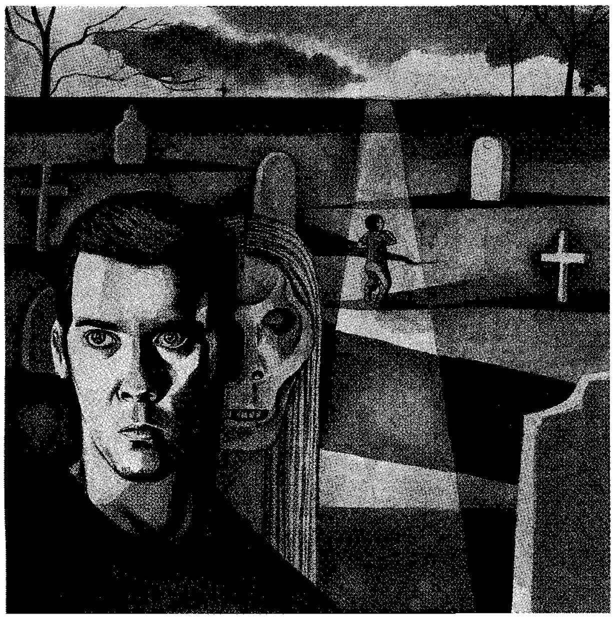
SERGIO RUZZIER

Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace—It has been more than twenty years since George Lucas directed a movie. Amid the fuss that has attended his return to the fray, no one seems to have wondered whether he was up to the task. With this film, Lucas demonstrates two facts: one, that he has kept abreast of the recent leaps in special effects, and two, that he hasn't a clue what to do with all the nondigital figures, otherwise known as “people.”—*A.L.* (5/24/99) (Union Square and Ziegfeld.)

The Thomas Crown Affair—A spirited, entertaining remake of the profoundly unimportant 1968 movie that starred Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway. In this version, Pierce Brosnan is the bored, man-who-has-everything plutocrat Thomas Crown, who makes off with a famous painting from the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Rene Russo is the insurance investigator who falls in love with him when she's supposed to be turning him over to the police. The movie is expert piffle for grownups, directed with great energy by John McTiernan.—*D.D.* (8/9/99) (Beekman, Chelsea West, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Union Square, and Waverly.)

West Beirut—The Lebanese director Ziad Doueiri left his native Beirut at the age of twenty, came to America, wound up as a cameraman on Quentin Tarantino pictures, and has now returned to his home town to make his first feature. The best début movies have a quality all their own—a kind of breathless, jolting ebullience, suggesting that young filmmakers would burst if they didn't get to tell their stories. Doueiri is one such enthusiast; his movie has its rough patches and, toward the end, its slightly damp longueurs, but it nails a time and a place so firmly that, when it ends, you feel bereft. Based largely on Doueiri's own teenage years, it stars his brother Rami as Tarek, a Beirut schoolboy with a sly smile. Tarek lives with his parents, Hala (Carmen Lebbos) and Riad (Joseph Bou Nassar), in the Muslim area of East Beirut; the tale begins in April, 1975, when sectarian rivalries split the city in two. Suddenly, Tarek and his friend Omar (Mohamad Chamas) are unable to attend school in the Eastern sector; the simple act of getting film developed involves a mortal risk. There are extraordinary scenes here as moments of light comedy flip casually into the treacherous, and vice versa; if you want solid political history, the film is no more than an infuriating sketch, but as an exercise in the unpredictable it shows both nerve and charm. Weirder still, the whole thing has a tang of the familiar; even boys in Beirut, it seems, stuck Bruce Lee posters on their bedroom walls. In Arabic.—*A.L.* (9/6/99) (Eastside Playhouse and Village East Cinemas.)

The Wild Child (1970)—François Truffaut's passionate, tough-minded rendering of the case of the Wild Child of Aveyron (captured by huntsmen in 1798). Truffaut himself plays Dr. Jean Itard, directing the marvellously expressive Gypsy boy Jean-Pierre Cargol both behind and in front of the camera. Truffaut based the film on Itard's writings; he once said that the strength of the story is that everything the child does "he does for the first time"—he even "sneezes for the first time, and sheds his first tears." The filmmaker's triumph is that through his lucid storytelling (and through Nestor Almendros's limpid black-and-white cinematography), he makes everything new for the audience, too. There's something primal about the child on all fours, moaning with joy, as he hops back and forth in the rain—something far beyond words. But as well as the feral, euphoric pull of nature, Truffaut captures the healing power of Itard's rationalism. In French.—*M.S.* (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 9-10.)



Opening Sept. 10, Kevin Bacon in "Stir of Echoes."

JENNY WILLIAMS

ALSO PLAYING

ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS: Art Greenwich Twin. . . . **THE ASTRONAUT'S WIFE:** Cinema 3rd Avenue, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME** (reviewed in our issue of 7/5/99): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **AUTUMN TALE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **BEDROOMS AND HALLWAYS:** Cinema Village. . . . **BETTER THAN CHOCOLATE:** Chelsea Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **BIG DADDY:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **DUDLEY DO-RIGHT:** Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **EYES WIDE SHUT** (7/26/99): Kips Bay Theatre and New York Twin. . . . **THE HAUNTING** (8/2/99): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HEAD ON:** Quad Cinema. . . . **ILLUMINATA:** Union Square. . . . **IN TOO DEEP:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL** (11/16/98 & 3/15/99; in English): Lincoln Square and Union Square. . . . **THE MATRIX** (4/26 & 5/3/99): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MY LIFE SO FAR:** First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . **PERFECT BLUE:** Cinema Village. . . . **THE SOURCE:** Film Forum. . . . **STIFF UPPER LIPS:** First & 62nd Cinemas and Village East Cinemas. . . . **TARZAN** (7/5/99): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE 13TH WARRIOR:** Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, Sutton, and Union Square. . . . **THOSE WHO LOVE ME CAN TAKE THE TRAIN:** Cinema Village. . . . **TRICK:** BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and Waverly. . . . **TWIN FALLS IDAHO:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU:** Angelika Film Center and Gotham Cinema. . . . **WILD WILD WEST** (7/12/99): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE WOUNDS:** Cinema Village.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—A film series entitled "The Joy of Pre-Code: Sex, Booze & Red Hot Jazz." Sept. 8: "Careless Lady" (1932, Kenneth MacKenna) and "Dancers in the Dark" (1931, David Burton). . . . Sept. 9: "Cocktail Hour" (1933, Victor Schertzinger) and "Hot Saturday" (1932, William Seiter). . . . Sept. 10-11: "Employees Entrance" (1933, Roy Del Ruth) and "Skyscraper Souls" (1932, Edgar Selwyn). . . . Sept. 12: A program of short films (1928-30) produced at Warners' Vitaphone Studios in Brooklyn and a program of cartoons from before the code. . . . Sept. 13: "Possessed" (1931, Clarence Brown) and "Common Clay" (1930, Victor Fleming). . . . Sept. 14: "Unfaithful" (1932, Harry Beaumont) and "The Office Wife" (1930, Lloyd Bacon).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films significant to the development of cinema but not currently in the museum's collection. Sept. 9 at 2:30 and Sept. 11 at 5: "The Woman Next Door" (1981, François Truffaut; in French). . . . Sept. 9 at 6 and Sept. 10 at 2:30: "The Wild Child" (†). . . . Sept. 10 at 6:30 and Sept. 12 at 1: "Titanic" (1997, James Cameron). . . . Sept. 11 at 2 and Sept. 13 at 6: "She's Gotta Have It" (1986, Spike Lee). . . . Sept. 13 at 2:30: "The Cameraman" (†). . . . Sept. 14 at 2:30: "King and Country" (1964, Joseph Losey). . . . Sept. 14 at 6: "Back Street" (†). . . . ¶ A program of films directed by Benjamin Christensen. Sept. 9 at 6: "The Night of Revenge" (1915; silent, with English intertitles). . . . Sept. 10 at 3: "His Wife, the Unknown" (1923; silent, with German intertitles and English voice-over). . . . Sept. 10 at 6: "Sealed Orders" (1913; silent, with Danish intertitles and English voice-over). . . . Sept. 10 at 8: "Seven Footprints to Satan" (1929; silent, with Danish intertitles and English voice-over). . . . Sept. 11 at 2:30: "The Devil's Circus" (1926; silent, with English intertitles). . . . Sept. 11 at 5: "Mockery" (1927; silent, with English intertitles). . . . Sept. 12 at 2:30: "Children of Divorce" (1939; in Danish). . . . Sept. 12 at 5: "The Child" (1940; in Danish). . . . Sept. 13 at 6: "Witch" (1922; silent, with English intertitles). . . . Sept. 14 at 6: "Come Home with Me" (1941; in Danish).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Films from Latin America. Sept. 8 at 1: "The Silence of Neto" (1994, Luis Argueta; Guatemala). . . . Sept. 8 at 3:15: "A Coup at Daybreak" (1998, Carlos Azpurúa; Venezuela). . . . ¶ A program of recent Danish films; in Danish, with English subtitles. Sept. 10 at 1 and 5 and Sept. 11 at 9:30: "Bleeder" (Nicolas Winding Refn). . . . Sept. 10 at 3 and 9:30 and Sept. 11 at 4: "Possessed" (Anders Ronnow-Klarlund). . . . Sept. 11 at 6:15, Sept. 12 at 4, and Sept. 14 at 1: "Breaking the Waves" (Lars von Trier). . . . Sept. 12 at 7:15: "Barbara" (Nils Malmros). . . . Sept. 13 at 1, 5, and 9:15: "Pizza King" (Ole Christian Madsen). . . . Sept. 13 at 3 and 7: "The Man Who Would Live Forever" (Torben Skjødt Jensen). . . . Sept. 14 at 4: "Let's Get Lost" (Jonas Elmer). . . . ¶ Sept. 11-12 at 2: "Hoppity Goes to Town" (1941, Dave and Max Fleischer).

BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—Sept. 8: "Flamenco" (1997, Carlos Saura; in Spanish). . . . Sept. 9: "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (†). . . . Sept. 10-11 "Kiss Me Deadly" (1955, Robert Aldrich). . . . Sept. 12: "The Lady Eve" (†). . . . Sept. 13: "Caravaggio" (1986, Derek Jarman). . . . Sept. 14: "Lamerica" (1995, Gianni Amelio; in Italian)

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of Blake Edwards films. Sept. 11 at 2: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961). . . . Sept. 11 at 4:30: "Experiment in Terror" (1962). . . . Sept 12 at 2: "Days of Wine and Roses" (1962). . . . Sept. 12 at 4:30: "The Pink Panther" (†).

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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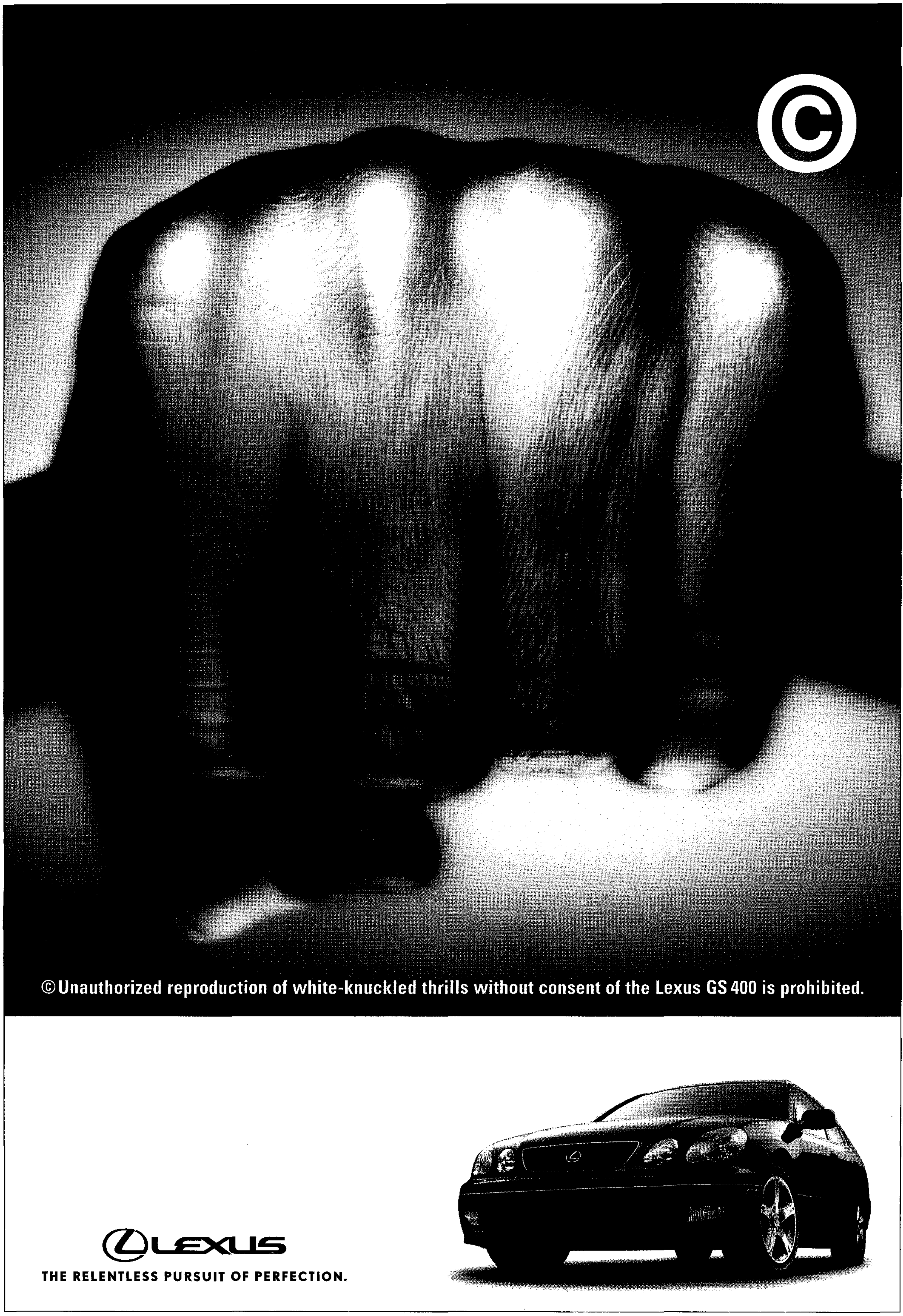
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.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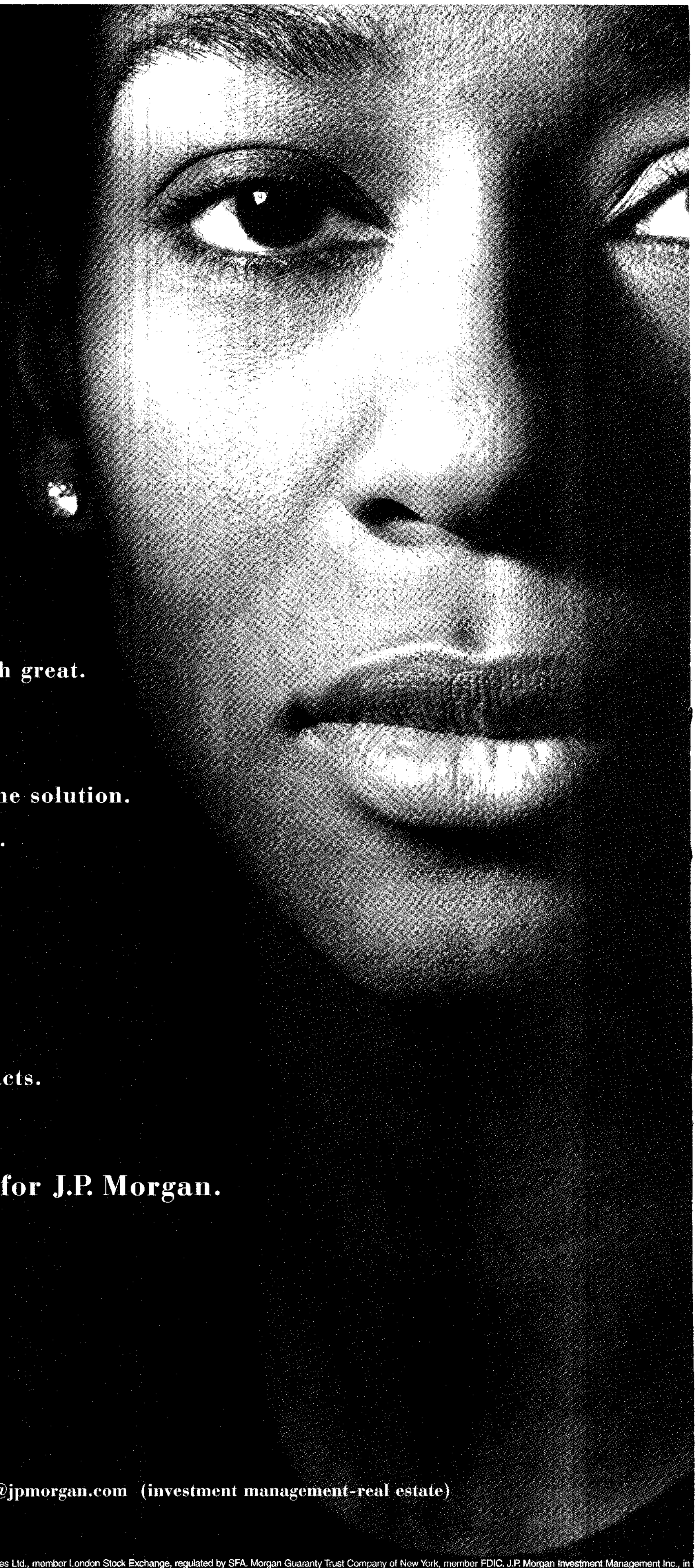

I will help one client succeed.
Then I will help another.
I will never let good interfere with great.

I will not always have the solution.
But I will always find it.
I will stretch.

I will assume nothing.
I will challenge everything.
I will rush to the defense of facts.

I work for J.P. Morgan.

JPMorgan sharonannmiller@jpmorgan.com (investment management-real estate)

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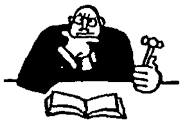
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

Reno redux.

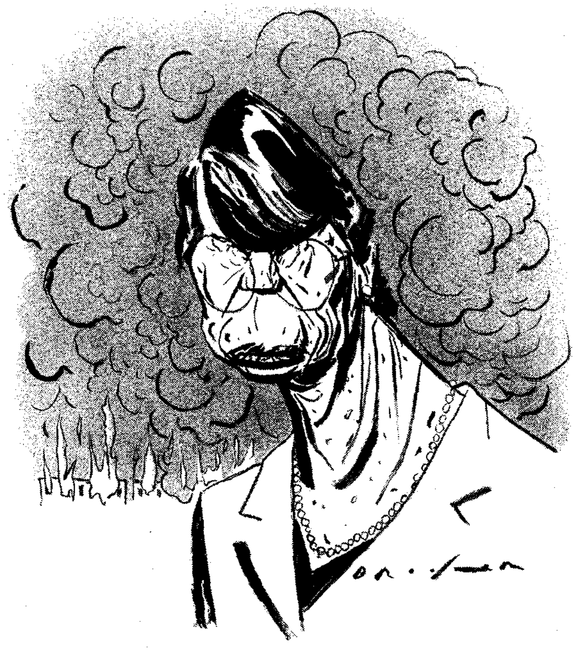


TED KOPPEL, whose on-air calm is his professional signature, seemed just a bit cross when opening his ABC "Nightline" program the other night. He was speaking of Attorney General Janet Reno, and recollecting her long-ago "Nightline" appearance on the evening of her first crisis on the job—the April 19, 1993, conflagration at the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas. On that occasion, Koppel had suggested that Reno might follow the model of some other nations in dealing with policy disasters and resign her position. "It struck me then, as it does now," Koppel said the other night, "that accepting responsibility without consequences is essentially meaningless."

Reno did not resign, of course, but went on to become one of the most significant members of President Clinton's Cabinet. The argument could be made that she owes it all to that original "Nightline" appearance. At the time, Reno represented something new, and, in truth, a bit strange, to the Beltway culture. She was a gangly Floridian who arrived in Washington without allies or experience in that city. Her first important decision, barely a month after her swearing-in, was to approve an F.B.I. plan to storm the Branch Davidian complex.

Janet Reno made an epic mistake—as many as twenty-five children inside the complex died—but the tragedy somehow gained her a kind of folk-hero status. In a city already growing accustomed to the artful ways of a dodgy new President, Reno's performance on "Nightline" and other TV shows immediately after the fire ("The responsibility lies with me") seemed like raw honesty, her inelegance a token of rare character—she even got points for addressing Koppel as "Mr. Kuh-*pell.*" There followed a period of remarkably good press, and Reno built an enormous reservoir of personal credibility that became her shield against intramural sniping from the White House and, later, deflected criticism from angry congressional Republicans who had come to regard her Justice Department as the most politicized in memory.

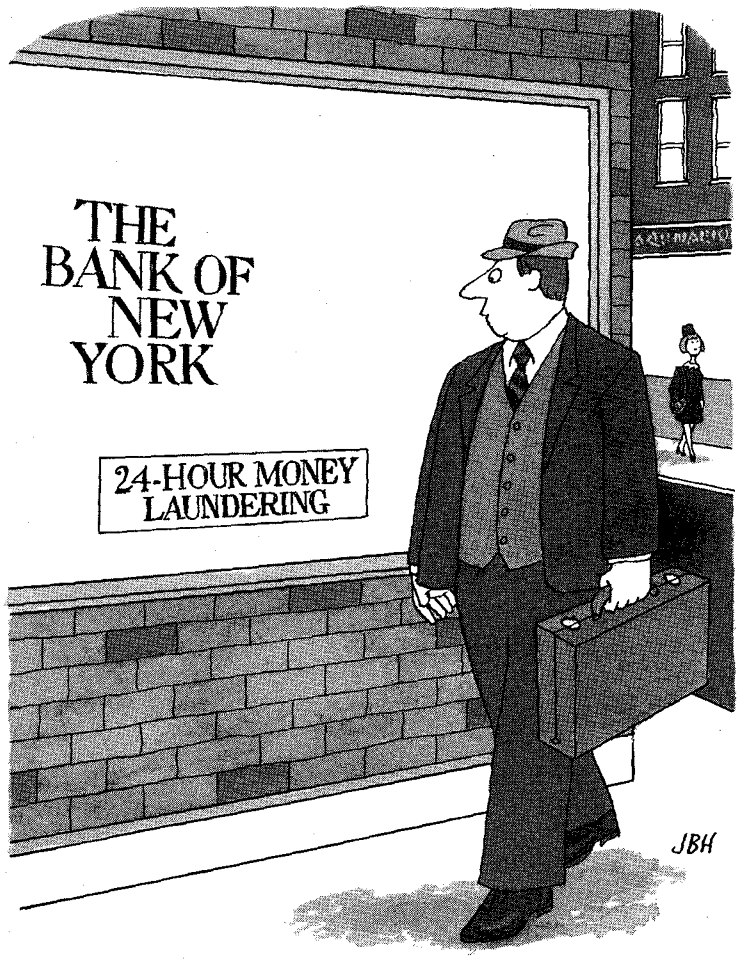
Now, with the admission by the F.B.I. that it fired pyrotechnic tear-gas grenades at a Davidian bunker near the main compound a few hours before the fire broke out, Reno has acknowledged that her credibility has been seriously damaged. For years, the F.B.I. and the Justice Department had forcefully denied that such potentially inflammatory devices were used, and, more important, Reno herself testified before Congress that they were not. Her best defense may be that she allowed herself to be lied to by her subordinates at the F.B.I., a damning admission for any manager. And she is said to be furious about the situation. She announced that there would be an independent investigation of the matter and, toward the end of last week, displayed her pique by dispatching United States Marshals to the F.B.I.'s J. Edgar Hoover Building to fetch yet another unwelcome surprise—a recently unearthed audio recording of F.B.I. agents, on the morning of the fire, asking for and receiving permission to use the pyrotechnic grenades.



In the course of unravelling the Waco mess, Reno will also need to address an untidy spat between two of her lawyers that surfaced after the existence of the grenades became known. One of the parties is Bill Johnston, the Assistant United States Attorney in Waco, who has been on the case since the beginning, and was a key figure in the revelation of the use of the once disavowed grenades.

Since 1993, the Waco operation has been the subject of litigation involving the Justice Department, first in the prosecution of Davidians who survived the fire, and now in a mammoth wrongful-death suit against the government filed by Davidians and their families. The tragedy has also been an abiding source of public speculation and fascination, embodied most emphatically by a documentary film producer named Michael McNulty. His 1997 Oscar-nominated film, "Waco: The Rules of Engagement," is the authority for conspiratorialists who believe that the fire at the Davidian compound was started by the government. (The government's position, unchanged by recent developments, is that Davidians set the fire

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE BRODNER



themselves.) McNulty has persistently sought to review the evidence from the scene, which has been held by the Texas Rangers on behalf of the Justice Department, and until recently he was consistently denied the opportunity, apparently because of pending litigation. Last year, McNulty began to lobby Johnston, the Waco prosecutor, and his persistence finally paid off. Johnston told me that he got a call from the Justice Department's top public-affairs officer, who had also been subject to McNulty's prodding. The public-affairs officer, he said, had reluctantly decided that McNulty could be given limited access if Johnston acted as a point of contact. Johnston agreed, and McNulty made four visits to the evidence room, where he discovered the existence of the pyrotechnic rounds that have caused all the fuss.

After McNulty's last visit, Johnston says, he received a telephone call from Marie Hagen, a trial lawyer in the department's torts branch in Washington, which is defending the government against the Davidians' wrongful-death suit. Hagen was angry and, Johnston says, "growled" at him on the phone, asking, "Did you let McNulty see the evidence?" When he told her that he had, he says, "she was very disturbed." Then, last week, Johnston received a communication from his superior, Bill Blagg, the United States Attorney in San Antonio, that he viewed as a thinly veiled threat. He was sent a three-page facsimile of 1993 documents indicating that he might have been present at an interview in which an F.B.I. agent said that "military gas rounds" were used at Waco. Johnston was surprised that the memo was being circulated by the department, and to him the implication was clear: he was being auditioned for the role of scapegoat. His fears were confirmed last week, he says, when Blagg told the Dallas *Morning News*, "I cannot think of a worse thing to be accused of as a U.S. attorney than knowing of favorable evidence and failing to disclose it, and I can't think of a worse thing than the Attorney General not knowing for six years what really happened."

Johnston says he doesn't remember the meeting; he doesn't dispute having attended it, but he says he would have had no idea at the time that the term "military gas" meant an incendiary grenade. In any case, Johnston has gone public with his concerns, and says that Representative Dan Burton, Republican of Indiana, called him to say that he didn't want to see anyone harassing him. Johnston isn't worried. "What are they going to do? Send us fewer paper clips?"

Hagen would not comment on the matter. A Justice Department official explained that "no litigator would want a third party given access to evidence during the course of litigation without being consulted. And it is not unusual for such a litigator to sometimes get upset over such a thing."

And so yet another unwanted controversy presents itself to Janet Reno, whose eventful career as Attorney General has come full circle. We now know what she meant back in 1993 when she said that she accepted "responsibility" for the Waco disaster—or, at least, we know what she did not mean. She did not mean that accepting responsibility implies paying the price for failure. That may explain how she became the longest-serving Attorney General of this century. —PETER J. BOYER

WESTCHESTER POSTCARD

Bill and Hill, meet Rob and Laura.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY cocktail-party conversations, which often wind up being about how much you think your house is worth, became unexpectedly livelier this summer. Suddenly, it was possible to speculate about how much your house would be worth if Bill and Hillary Clinton moved in next door. Most reporters missed this authentically Westchesterish aspect of the story, because they were too busy poking television cameras in local residents' faces and asking: In the event of a Clinton relocation, how will you feel about all those television cameras?

This, of course, is a very silly question, because if there is any place on earth that has historically been hospitable to the medium of television it is Westchester County. It could be argued that without the inspiration provided by the leafy suburbs of Westchester the television sitcom could never have survived to become the mature art form it is today.

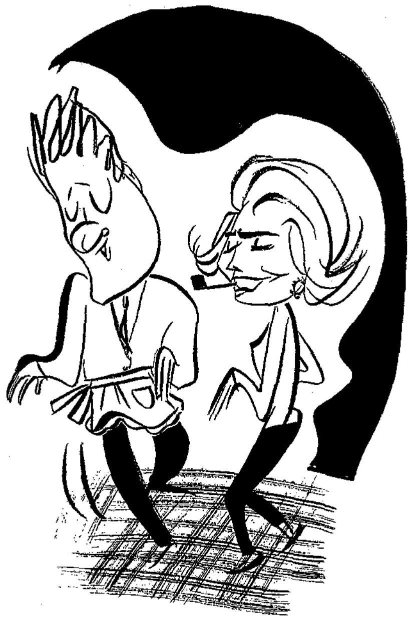
Chappaqua, where the Clintons just signed a contract to buy an eleven-room Dutch Colonial priced at $1,695,000, is down the road from Peekskill, which was home to Mrs. Garrett's cheese shop in "Facts of Life." Ann Marie, the character Marlo Thomas played in "That Girl," grew up just north of the Westchester border in Brewster, a few exits away from Pound Ridge, where the First Couple looked over a seven-acre, $1.2-million property with tennis courts. Tuckahoe, where Bea Arthur trod the fine line between feminist and harpy in the Norman Lear sitcom "Maude," is right next to Edgemont, where the Clintons toured a seven-bedroom turn-of-the-century Colonial priced at $1.7 million. (Edgemont, the Clintons may have reasoned, was less likely than Tuckahoe to inspire unflattering limericks.) And New Rochelle, which the Clintons also visited in their quest for suburban housing, was immortalized by "The Dick Van Dyke Show"—a program that may have uncannily predicted what the Westchester phase of Bill and Hillary Clinton's life together will be like.

Comparisons between Bill and Hillary Clinton and Rob and Laura Petrie may not be as striking as those famously spooky Lincoln/Kennedy parallels (Lincoln had a secretary named Kennedy, Kennedy had a secretary named Lincoln, etc.), but they are difficult to ignore. Both couples feature one hardworking careerist trying to make it in a new field (Rob/Hillary) and one housebound spouse with way too much free time and a tendency to get into fixes that require blubbering apologies (Laura/Bill). Both families have one child (Ritchie/Chelsea), who appears infrequently and says almost nothing. Both breadwinners have to contend with irrational, mercurial screamers (Alan Brady/Rudolph Giuliani). Even the details offer up eerie parallels: Morey Amsterdam/Chuck Schumer; Capri pants/golf pants; twin beds/separate bedrooms. And so on.

Commentators discussing the retirement years of our young President have invoked Fitzgerald's shopworn dictum that there are no second acts in American lives. Part of the beauty of a sitcom like "The Dick Van Dyke Show," however, was that each episode did, reassuringly, have a second act, after the commercial break, in which the mishaps and mixups of the first half of the show were satisfactorily, if somewhat speedily, resolved. Perhaps it is this sort of expeditious redemption, and not just an eleven-room Dutch Colonial, that the Clintons are really looking for in Westchester. With this idea in mind, it is possible to envision the first few episodes of "The Hillary Rodham Clinton Show":

- Hillary is excited about putting on a talent show to raise money for local Democrats but has second thoughts when Bill is cast as Mark Antony in the "Cleopatra" sketch opposite Jennifer, her gorgeous administrative assistant!
- There's heck to pay when Bill takes Hillary's new limo, provided at taxpayers' expense, to McDonald's—and puts a big scratch in the fender!
- Bill has some explaining to do when he goes on a talk show—and blabs about what Hillary really did with those billing records from the Rose Law Firm!
- In a flashback episode, Bill and Hillary reminisce about Bill's Army days—and how he avoided having any!
- When Bill and Hillary discover they were not legally married, Bill vanishes forever. Series finale.

—ANDY BOROWITZ

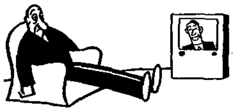


The Clintons

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

THE SPORTING LIFE

Why hasn't America noticed one of the fastest men on earth?



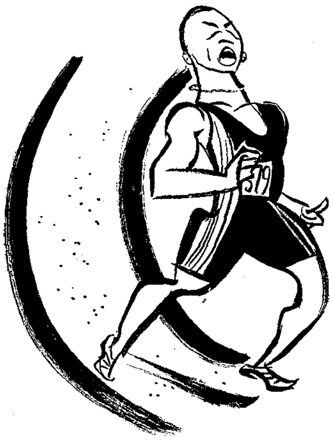
ON August 26th, an American did something that no one had done before. In the World Championships in Seville, Spain, Michael Johnson ran the four hundred metres in 43.18 seconds. That figure will not mean much to the uninitiated, but it cracked the world record wide open—a record that was previously held by another American, Butch Reynolds. The Reynolds time had stood intact for eleven years; in the arena of track and field, that is nudging the status of myth.

Johnson himself has no need to nudge. His achievements have already nailed his place in the pantheon. He now holds the world record at both two hundred and four hundred metres. His win in Seville took his tally of World Championship golds to nine, past Carl Lewis's. The president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, Primo Nebiolo, paid Homeric tribute. "Michael Johnson's exploit at this World Championships is something that will long remain in the memories of all those who witnessed it firsthand or on their television screens," he said. "This World Championships is drawing massive television audiences around the world, further proof of the attraction of our sport for fans on all the continents." The exception was the large continent to the west of Dr. Nebiolo. Johnson broke the record at two-forty-five in the afternoon, Eastern Standard Time. And what were his fellow-Americans watching at that moment? "One Life to Live." Or Montel Williams. Or auto racing from Indianapolis on ESPN2. To be precise: a *rerun* of auto racing from Indianapolis.

Try as it might, America just cannot learn to love track and field: an odd omission, because it should be a beautiful friendship. All the mantras of autosuggestion that are chanted in the ears of American youth—instructing it to better itself, believe in itself, and generally hang tough—are embodied in the tuned torsos of the sprint kings. Johnson even runs in gold shoes; what more do people need?

What they need is more TV—not a cure that one recommends too often. Americans could watch Seville on television, but it was taped, and, as anyone who has ever recorded a ballgame and vowed to watch it the next day can tell you, non-live sports is dead. It isn't even sports; it's archive fodder. And so the circle is complete: Americans don't watch track and field because there's nowhere to watch it, and the networks won't broadcast it because nobody wants to watch. They tried halfheartedly with the Atlanta Olympics, but all that most of us can remember is fifteen-year-old gymnasts in turquoise leotards smiling through their tears as they bravely brained themselves on the parallel bars.

The World Championships are the Olympics without the trimmings or the trash. No synchronized swimming, no underwater fencing, no cross-country chess: just a lot of long, high, and fast stuff that you can measure. The games in Seville were, in fact, more Olympian than the real thing. For those of you who don't know what you missed, here is what you missed. Marion Jones, basketball star turned speed machine, burning rubber off the hundred-metre strip; her brick-built husband, C.J., putting the shot as if he were throwing a used tissue in the garbage; and the great Maurice Greene, just before he pulled off the sprint double (one hundred *and* two hundred), pacing the track like a lion getting restless for its haunch of zebra.

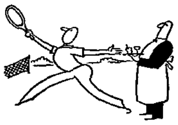


Michael Johnson

And then there was Johnson. Even from a high camera, you can spot him instantly: a tight and tidy figure, bunching his fists as he runs, in the way that small, cornered boys get ready to box. Not for him the brother-from-another-planet sleekness of Carl Lewis, with those long, tentacular limbs; Johnson bustles around, head motionless, knees picked up so high he could be running in place. Whether he consciously modelled himself on a Japanese bullet train is unclear, but, rounding the three-hundred-metre bend, which is where he wins his races, Johnson tilts so perfectly that, as the curve unwinds, the stragglers are left ten or fifteen metres in his wake. And, through it all, there is the Johnson trademark: he leans *backward*, cleaving the air in his personal wind tunnel, his natural deportment wiping out any flicker of haste. In Seville, he crossed the finish line, one hand aloft, with no more ado than a waiter bringing cocktails on a tray. You couldn't believe what you were watching. But, then again, you probably didn't watch. —ANTHONY LANE

SUPPORTING PLAYERS

The man who keeps André Agassi from getting dehydrated.



ON the third day of the U.S. Open last week, with both the injured Pete Sampras (ranked No. 1) and the injured Patrick Rafter (last year's winner) withdrawing, people started telling André Agassi (No. 2), "Now you're going to win!"

So, with that unwelcome pressure, Gil Reyes, Agassi's personal trainer and security manager, and Brad Gilbert, his coach, tried to keep their cool as they quickly hustled Agassi—trailing a horde of eager fans—to an available court for their between-matches routine of practice hitting. It was a hot, sunny high noon. Agassi, unsmiling and with his head shaved, was bare to the waist and was wearing black shorts and white, endorsed Nikes. He took two bottles of a custom-blended vitamin-and-mineral-spiked electrolyte liquid from Reyes and sampled it. Gilbert, a somewhat rumpled thirty-eight-year-old veteran of the Lendl-Becker-Edberg eighties, who had a No. 4 ranking in 1990, gave the drinks a disdainful smirk. Agassi got down to business, sending his impressive line drives, crosscourts, forehands, and backhands aggressively at Gilbert.

Reyes is a serious, soft-spoken forty-eight-year-old man with a mustache and a Mr. T-like body. Clutching a large bag that contained electrolytes, vitamins, and minerals, he settled in at a far corner of the court. Around his neck he wore a heavy gold chain with a gold pendant, an abstract rendering of the Holy Trinity given to him by Agassi. "I never take it off; it's a symbol of our unyielding friendship and faith. André made a smaller copy of it for his earring," Reyes told me. "He's my closest friend. He's now the most physically fit he's ever been in his life. He's five-eleven. He weighed one hundred and forty-six pounds when he was eighteen. Now we got him up to one hundred and seventy-two pounds. This past year, he's demonstrated the enormous capacity of the human heart and the human will. After he won Wimbledon in '92, and the U.S. Open in '94 and the Australian Open in '95, he slid down in two years to No. 141. Then he started training hard. By last June, he was able to win the French Open, and he was restored to No. 4, and he was a finalist at Wimbledon, losing only to Pete Sampras. He's worked so hard."

On the court, Agassi took a short break and sipped his sports drink. "Every day, we try to assess the elements, and we determine what he needs," Reyes said. "You can't hold back on liquids. Every day, I pray for his safety. My mother always taught me that good things happen to people who work hard. She always said, '*Que lindo es soñar despierto.*' It means 'How beautiful it is to dream while you're awake.' My mother continues to be my hero. I grew up as a field-worker, starting in third grade after school, picking cotton and pecans in Las Cruces, on the Texas-New Mexico border. I was paid fifty cents a week. Then we moved to East Los Angeles, and in junior high I started learning English. My mother taught me to direct my dreams and my energies. I've tried to share that with André."

On the court, Agassi came to the net and tried to drop-shot Gilbert, but the ball was stopped at the top of the net. Gilbert grinned.

"I had never seen a tennis match until I met André," Reyes said. "I was working at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, as their strength-and-conditioning coach. He came to my gym when he was eighteen and asked what we did for the basketball players. That's how it started. Now his dreams are in public."

On the court, after the session, Gilbert tossed used tennis balls to the fans as gifts. Agassi, now all easy smiles, his bald dome sparkling with sweat, polished

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off a bottle of electrolytes. Then he hit a ball upward with his racquet, and quickly hit a second ball to bounce off the first one, still in the air. The fans applauded mightily. —LILLIAN ROSS

WALL STREET FOLLIES

A new study shows America's fat cats getting fatter.

J. P. Morgan, seldom portrayed as a radical, maintained that no corporate chieftain should earn more than twenty times what his workers were paid. Things have changed since Morgan's day. By 1980, when Ronald Reagan was elected to the White House, the typical C.E.O. of a big American company was taking home about forty times the annual earnings of a typical worker on the factory floor. Reagan, it will be recalled, didn't think that this reverse redistribution had gone far enough—"We're the party that wants to see an America where people can still get rich," he told one Republican gathering—and by the time he left office even more had been done to alleviate the suffering of C.E.O.s. In 1990, they took in about eighty-five times as much as factory workers.

Still, the rewards that senior executives enjoyed during the Reagan era were mere hors d'oeuvres compared with what was to come. Between 1990 and 1998, according to a new study published jointly by the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies and the advocacy group United for a Fair Economy, the annual "compensation" of C.E.O.s at large firms rose from $1.8 million to $10.6 million—an increase of almost five hundred per cent. Workers' wages also rose during that period, but their rate of ascent barely kept pace with inflation. Last year, big-league C.E.O.s pocketed, on the average, four hundred and nineteen times the earnings of a typical production worker.

Most of the fortunes received by C.E.O.s come in the form of stock grants and options packages. (When Michael Eisner, the chairman and C.E.O. of Walt Disney and primus inter pares of nineties plutocrats, earned more than $575 million in 1998, almost $570 million of it came from cashing in options he had received in previous years.) In theory, at least, these remuneration schemes can perform useful economic functions: they can encourage C.E.O.s to act in the interests of shareholders (since Eisner became chairman of Disney, in 1984, the firm's market capitalization has risen from $2 billion to $58 billion); they can allow small companies to recruit talented executives (witness the Internet sector); and they can reward outstanding performance. In practice, however, the options movement has degenerated into a boondoggle that robs shareholders and taxpayers while rewarding cronyism and mediocrity.

Graef Crystal, an independent pay consultant who serves as the Ida Tarbell of our own Gilded Age, has recently unearthed a number of particularly egregious examples. One is Linda J. Wachner, the chairman and C.E.O. of Warnaco, which makes Calvin Klein jeans and Fruit of the Loom bras. Warnaco is doing well this year, but last year the company lost $32 million, after taxes, and delivered a total return to its shareholders of minus 18.6 per cent. Nonetheless, Wachner received a salary of $2.7 million, a bonus of $6 million, a restricted stock grant worth $6.5 million, and a package of options that Crystal valued at $58.2 million—for a grand total of $73.4 million. Another of Crystal's case studies is Citigroup, the financial conglomerate that was created last fall when Travelers Group, the insurance company, merged with Citicorp, the country's second-biggest commercial bank. The chairman of Travelers, Sanford Weill, had been receiving exorbitant paychecks for years, but Citicorp had maintained a (relatively) conservative pay policy. In 1997, the year before the merger, John Reed, the Citicorp chairman, earned about $4 million. After the merger, Weill and Reed shared the titles of C.E.O. and chairman, and this posed a quandary: should Weill's pay be cut or Reed's raised? No prizes for guessing the answer. Last year, Reed received a compensation package that Crystal valued at $44.4 million.

Greed on this scale is often written off as the inevitable, if unsightly, by-product of a vibrant economic system. Perhaps. But as the Fed chairman, Alan Greenspan, and the second-richest man in America, Warren Buffett, and others have pointed out, a number of things could be done to restrain the swinish tendencies of C.E.O.s while maintaining an effective incentive structure. The first step would be to force companies to account properly for the money they bestow on their leaders. Under the current practice, the costs of options packages are not fully reflected in firms' profit-and-loss accounts. If Disney's profits had been reduced by several hundred million dollars when it granted Eisner his options, the company's board of directors might have thought twice about approving those options. Reducing the tax deductibility of executive compensation is another idea that makes sense. At the moment, companies can deduct any payment deemed to be "performance related," which means that taxpayers are indirectly subsidizing corporate largesse.

The most urgent reform doesn't need legislation, just old-fashioned moral suasion. The key point about most current options packages is that they grant their owners the right to buy vast numbers of shares at fixed prices. As long as the stock market continues to go up, C.E.O.s are lavishly rewarded simply for drawing breath. A more rational system—one that has been recommended by Greenspan—would be to index the prices at which the options kick in to industry-wide stock averages, or to the S. & P. 500, so that an overall market rise of, say, twenty per cent would raise the gift stock's purchase price by that amount when the options were exercised. If this happened, C.E.O.s would be like schoolchildren and most everybody else. Only if they outperformed their peers would they receive special prizes. —JOHN CASSIDY

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MEDICAL DISPATCH

CONTAGION

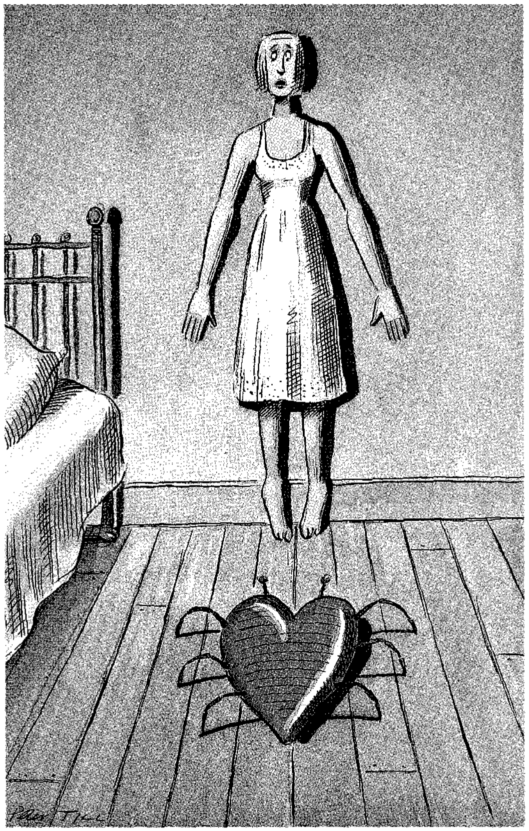
A sometimes lethal sexual epidemic that condoms can't stop.

BY JEROME GROOPMAN

LAST year, I was called by a friend in California, Dan West, about his daughter Jennifer, a junior at a small college in western Massachusetts. Jenny had had an abnormal Pap smear on a routine examination she was given at the student health service. The doctor found an irregular growth in her cervix which, he said, might be cancerous. It was the result of a sexually transmitted virus called papilloma. "She was stunned and frightened, and so am I," Dan said. "We'd feel more comfortable if she could be seen in Boston."

Having arranged for Jenny to visit a gynecologist at the Boston hospital where I practice, I met with her ahead of time. (Names and identifying details have been changed for confidentiality.) A young woman with short, curly black hair and dark eyes, Jenny said she had had no symptoms of an infection—no fever, pelvic discomfort, or vaginal discharge. After a long pause, she told me she had informed the college doctor that she had had intercourse with only two partners in her life, and never without a condom. She added that the doctor had met her statement with a skeptical look. "I didn't like his attitude," Jenny said. "He made me feel as if I must be promiscuous."

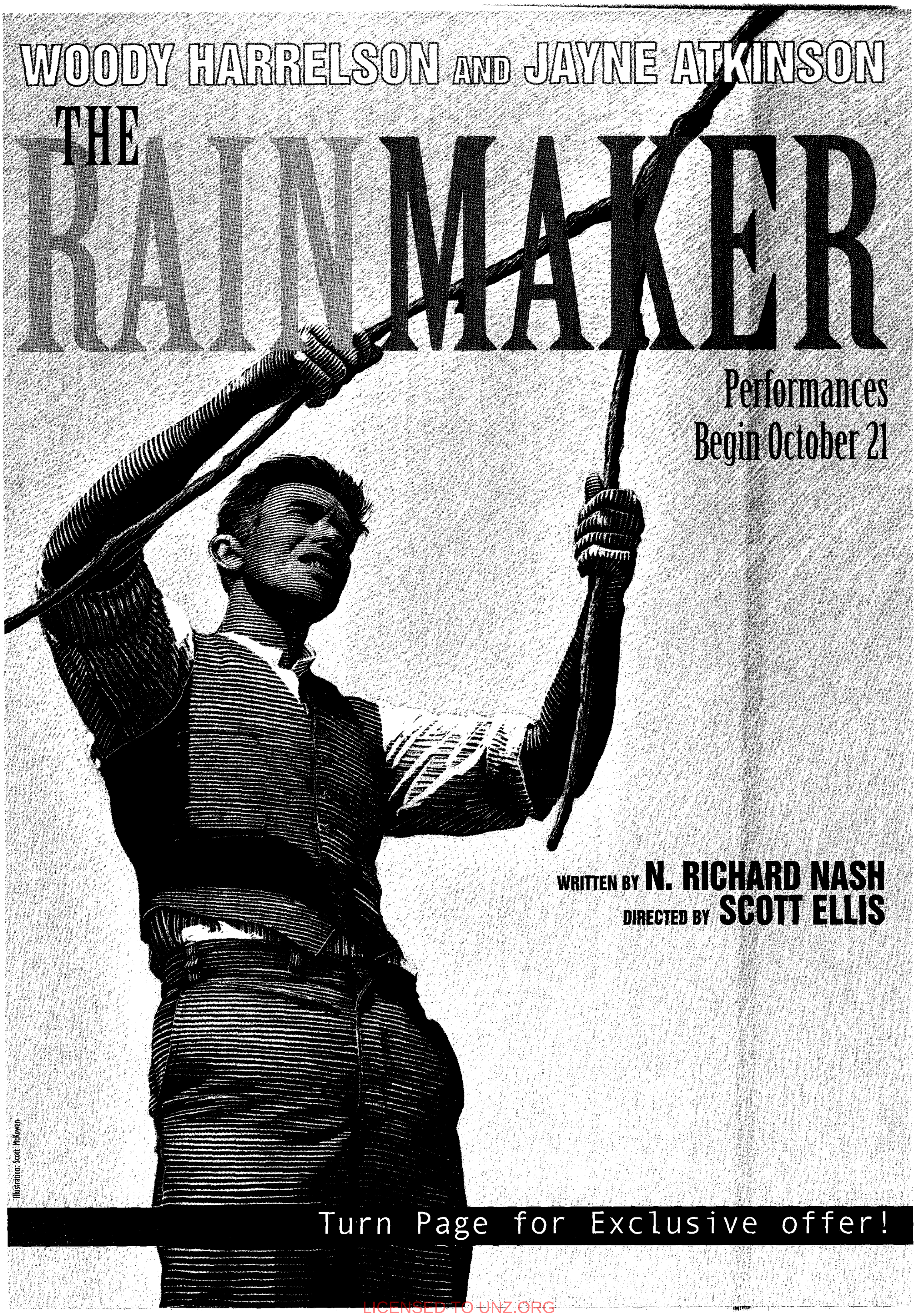
At our hospital, Jenny underwent a colposcopy—a procedure in which the gynecologist uses a magnifying instrument to examine the tissues of the vagina and the cervix. The area was painted with diluted acetic acid, a vinegarlike solution that causes papilloma-infected tissue to turn snowy white. Just inside the opening of the cervix, the lesion was now clearly visible—a ragged plateau of whitened tissue. After numbing the area with a local anesthetic, the gynecologist used an electric cautery to burn a border around the growth, and removed it.



Ten million American women have active papillomavirus infections and are at risk for cervical cancer.

PETER TILL

Later that week, I sat with the pathologist who was analyzing the excised lesion. The lining of the cervix normally consists of orderly layers of tightly packed cells: under the microscope, it resembles a landscaped stone wall, with a graduation of large, nearly cubical cells at the base and thin, closely joined cells at the top. Jenny's tissue, though, looked as if it had been blown apart by a cannon, the finely ordered architecture having been replaced by a palisade of bloated cells with bizarre, coal-black nuclei. "Severe dysplasia," the pathologist concluded, pointing out the characteristic ballooned look of the papilloma-infected cells. "But it hasn't yet progressed



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to carcinoma.” DNA analysis of the tissue revealed that Jenny had type 16 papilloma virus—the virulent genital strain that most often leads to cervical cancer.

“The classical medical teaching was that cervical cancer is a disease of ‘bad girls,’ ” says Dr. Joel Palefsky, a professor at the University of California at San Francisco and a leading expert on human papilloma viruses. In fact, however, papilloma virus is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States and Europe, occurring at some point in up to seventy-five per cent of sexually active women. Nor have safe-sex practices stopped the infection rate from growing dramatically over the past couple of decades. “Unlike other sexually transmitted pathogens, like gonorrhea or H.I.V., papilloma virus is easy to pass around,” says Palefsky, who has been outspoken in calling for an aggressive response to this epidemic. “The doctor asks a young woman with an abnormal Pap smear or a worrisome lesion ‘Have you had unsafe sex?’ and by that he means intercourse without a condom.” Where papilloma is concerned, intercourse can be unsafe even with a condom. That’s because the papilloma virus lives in cells of the outer skin as well as in the interior cells lining the vagina, cervix, anus, and urethra. Condoms do not cover the entire shaft of the penis and do not block contact with pubic skin. So, during the petting and frottage of foreplay, or during intercourse with a condom, papilloma-laden skin cells from Jenny’s boyfriend could have come in contact with her vulva and vagina, enabling the virus to track up to her cervix. In addition, the minor friction of frottage and intercourse is believed to cause microscopic abrasions that make it easier for the virus to enter the vagina and the cervix. Even dead skin cells can contain the papilloma virus and remain infectious for days.

It has been estimated that about ten million American women—most of them in their late teens and twenties—have active infections. A million of them have diseased, and perhaps precancerous, tissue as a result. About eighty thousand have early cervical cancer that is still contained within the inner lining of the tissue. Some sixteen thousand have cancer that has invaded the cervix more deeply, and each year about five thousand of those will die. In Africa and Asia, and on the Indian subcontinent, where women don’t have regular Pap tests, cervical cancer from papilloma is the most common cause of cancer-related death.

Widespread though papilloma is, few people even know when they’re infected, since it seldom produces noticeable symptoms. The Centers for Disease Control have no program for tracking the virus. Indeed, until recently there were no sensitive methods for detecting it. Papilloma virus cannot be cultured in the laboratory from clinical specimens, so in the past doctors had to make a diagnosis by examining cells obtained by Pap smear. But Pap tests are notoriously inaccurate: any exam will miss between twenty and forty per cent of infected women. Now that DNA testing for papilloma is available, studies have begun to collect more accurate information about the incidence and the course of infection. One such study published last year followed more than six hundred female students at Rutgers who were examined every six months. The results were instructive: in the course of thirty-six months, new papilloma infections occurred in more than forty per cent of the young women. Most infections lasted about eight months and then subsided, but after two years about ten per cent of the students still carried the active virus in the vagina and the cervix. And those persistent infections were most common with the virulent, cancer-linked types of the virus.

Papilloma is a relatively small virus—essentially, two strings of DNA enclosed within a spherical protein shell. Viewed under an electron microscope, it looks something like a golf ball. There are as many as a hundred papilloma types, and they can infect virtually any cell on the skin or on the inner lining of tissues. For unknown reasons, certain types of the papilloma virus target the skin of the hands and feet, others the lining of the mouth, and still others the genitalia.

These viruses were first recognized as causing warts on the hands and feet—areas of hypertrophied skin filled with keratin, the hard protein that

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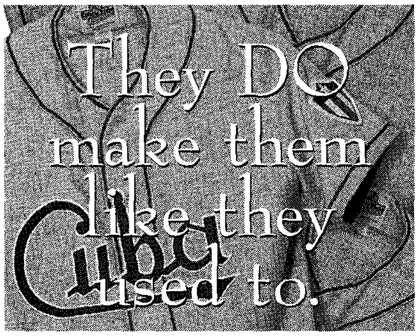
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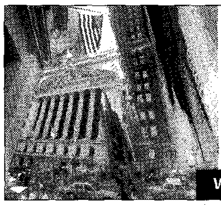

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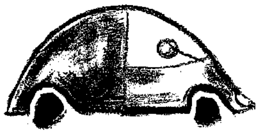
forms toenails and fingernails. Warts used to be considered mainly a cosmetic nuisance rather than a forerunner of life-threatening cancers, and the types of papilloma that cause warts on the fingers and toes are, indeed, largely innocuous. Viral strains that target the face can make skin cancer more likely, though. (Oddly, these types of papilloma virus are most heavily shed from the eyebrows.) Still other strains, which grow primarily in the lining of the mouth, result in elevated, pea-size nodules that can develop into aggressive and fatal squamous cancers. A link between genital papilloma infections and cervical cancer was first demonstrated in the early eighties, by Harold zur Hausen, a German virologist. Since then, scientists have identified about twenty papilloma types that primarily infect the cervix, vulva, vagina, penis, and anus. Of these, four are most often found within the malignant cells of genital cancers, with type 16 accounting for about half of the cases in the United States and Europe. We also know that papilloma is implicated in ninety-five per cent of cervical-cancer cases.

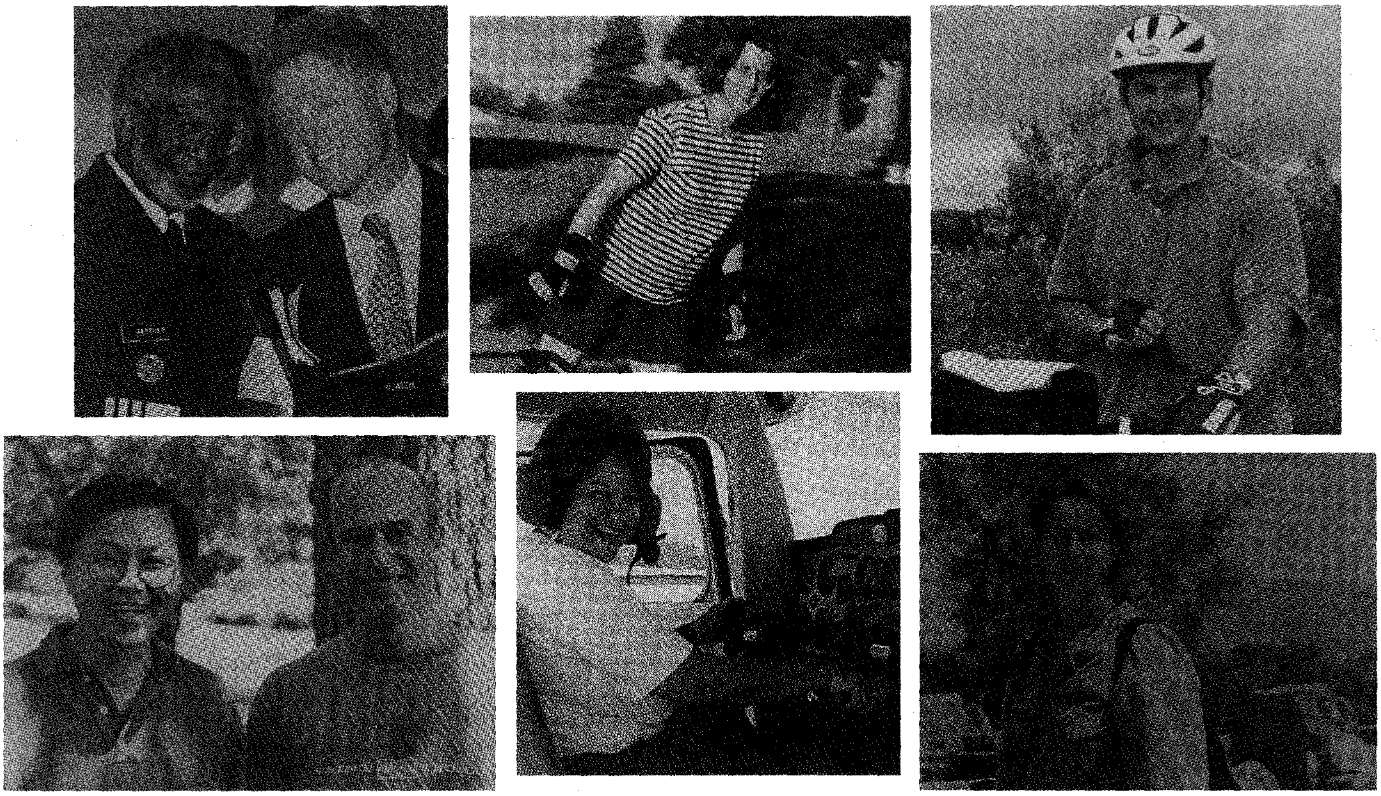


In fact, cervical cancer is probably the best understood example of how viral infection can lead to malignancies. Cell division is regulated largely by two proteins—one called Rb and the other known as p53. Dr. Peter Howley, working first at the National Cancer Institute and now at Harvard Medical School, found that two genes in the papilloma virus, E6 and E7, make proteins that attach themselves to p53 and Rb, respectively, and deactivate them, causing the cell to reproduce without constraint. "It's a progressive process," Howley says. "The virus is the initiating event. First, it causes the cell to grow wildly. As it does so, it accumulates more and more damaged DNA that cannot be repaired, thereby accumulating mutations that turn it into a cancer cell."

Those silent molecular changes are reflected in the cellular changes that the pathologist had pointed out on Jenny West's Pap smear. At an early stage, there are subtle distortions in the size and shape of the cells as the virus causes them to expand. Then their neat, uniform arrangement along the cervical lining is destroyed as the damaged cells grow in a haphazard fashion. Full-blown cancer occurs when the cells start to ignore normal tissue boundaries and threaten to invade more deeply into the muscle of the cervix and the uterus.

THE important thing, of course, is to catch it early, and if lesions can be detected and removed before they turn malignant, cervical cancer can often be prevented. The primary method of detection is still the Pap test, named for the pathologist George Papanicolaou, who pioneered the method in New York in the nineteen-twenties. The Pap test has since become a routine part of the gynecological exam. First, a speculum—an instrument that opens to expand the vagina—allows the doctor to examine the cervix directly. Then a spatula is inserted into the expanded vagina until it meets the lower cusp of the cervix, where it is rotated, so as to scrape off several layers of cells. Carefully withdrawing the spatula, the doctor deposits a viscous sample of cells and mucus on a glass slide. Next, a cotton-tipped swab or brush is inserted deep into the canal of the cervix that leads to the uterus. The area where the cervix merges into the uterus is known as the transformation zone, and it is there that precancerous lesions and cervical cancers most frequently develop. The cotton swab retrieves a second sample of cells, which is spread on another glass slide.

The procedure is crude and inexact. If the cells are not spread on the slides in an even and uniform manner, they can clump and prevent accurate inspection. Sometimes other contents of the cervix, such as blood, bacteria, or yeast, contaminate the sample and prevent the detection of abnormal cells. If the cervical cells are exposed to air too long before being fixed on the slides, they can be distorted. But the greatest threat to accuracy is human error. The average slide contains anywhere from fifty thousand to three hundred thousand cells. Some technicians and pathologists joke that it's like "Where's Waldo?" But with Waldo, the character has consistent features, and you know he's around somewhere. With a Pap smear, someone has to inspect every cell on the slide: if the sample includes only a few abnormal



Clockwise left to right: Surgeon General David Satcher (shown with President Clinton) received The Bayer Institute Outstanding Physician Communicator Award last month. Weekends, Nananda Col trades her lab coat for rollerblades. David Pompliano cycling through France along the Dordogne River. An avid traveler, Teresa Przytycka is pictured here vacationing in Olympia, Greece. Off duty, Maysel Kemp White completes the flight time required for her pilot's license. Martin Markowitz shown with mentor David Ho is busy pursuing leads in AIDS research.

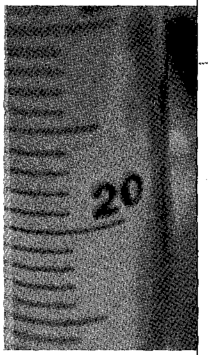
CELEBRITIES OF SCIENCE

GENERATION NEXT

by Barbara J. Culliton

Medical research is one of the great success stories of the past fifty years, and the development of an astonishing array of lifesaving drugs for everything from heart disease to cancer to AIDS is the highlight of that success. "The quality of health care worldwide depends in large measure on advances in drug therapy," says Jan Leschly, chief executive of SmithKline Beecham and new chairman of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) Foundation. The foundation's mission is to advance medicine by supporting cooperative research between industry and academia. Donna Moore, PhRMA Foundation president, reports that over the thirty-four years of its existence the foundation has sponsored research for more than 2,400 young scientists. "Eighty-six percent of them are still in academia—teaching the teachers and teaching the 'doers,'" she says with pride. "And we continue to jump-start the careers of the next generation of scientists."

Research is vital and it ultimately leads to new drugs. The PhRMA Foundation, which obtains its money from pharmaceutical company members who seek to foster cutting-edge research, has spent more than forty-three million dollars on young scientists since it was founded in 1965. The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, one of the industry's largest, has contributed more than eighty million to unrestricted biomedical research since 1977. Many other large pharmaceutical companies have established charitable institutions through which they support the next generation of scientists—young lions preparing to solve basic questions about human health and disease.



UNDERSTANDING HIV

AIDS continues to confound medical science despite recent advances in drug therapy. Martin Markowitz, M.D., is a physician turned researcher who hopes to learn why the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) persists even in patients who are taking the full cocktail of anti-AIDS drugs. He wants to know whether it is possible to rid patients of HIV once and for all.

"I was trained as a physician, specializing in oncology, and I originally set up a practice in New York City," says Markowitz, who graduated from Stanford University School of Medicine in 1978. During the eighties his practice grew to include many patients with AIDS. Markowitz witnessed an "explosion" in anti-AIDS drugs and helped to set up the first designated AIDS center in New York City at St. Clare's Hospital in midtown Manhattan.

> The pharmaceutical industry has long played a critical but little heralded role in support of unrestricted biomedical research.

"About seven years ago I decided I needed to switch my career to research," Markowitz recalls. It was a big step, made possible by an invitation to join the team of renowned AIDS researcher David Ho, M.D., at The Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in New York City. Ho is Markowitz' mentor in what Ho calls "studies of the dynamics of HIV. We're trying to understand the basics of HIV's capacity to destroy the immune system."

Working together for the past seven years, Markowitz and Ho have received strong support from a large number of pharmaceutical companies (including Bristol-Myers Squibb), which has allowed them to conduct novel clinical trials. They have made important discoveries that bring both bad news and good news. The bad news is that current drug therapy, no matter how intensive, does not completely eliminate small reservoirs of HIV in the body. The good news, he says, is that "We have learned how the virus replicates and how a patient's immune system responds to it. Knowing this, we have potential leads about where to go next in research—leads that may eventually help us overcome the obstacles to discontinuing drug therapy without adverse consequences."

WEIGHING THE RISKS

Nananda Col, M.D. of Tufts University School of Medicine and the New England Medical Center in Boston, has her aim set squarely on a target of substantial importance—weighing the risks and benefits of drugs for disease prevention. Col is using mathematics to help menopausal women make important decisions about their health based on their individual lifestyles and history of disease, as well as the health histories of their relatives.

"The bulk of my research involves mathematical models to help women make treatment decisions about therapy to reduce the risk of heart disease, breast cancer, and osteoporosis," she says. Decisions must be based on multiple risk factors as they apply to a particular individual, not an 'average woman.' "It does not help women to learn that hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is generally considered to be a good thing after menopause," says Col. "What is important is that each woman has a way to decide whether it is good for her. The reality is that some women should take HRT. Others should probably just take drugs to prevent bone loss, and some should not take any drug therapy at all."

Col has devised a simple questionnaire for menopausal women that permits her to use a computer model to weigh the combination of benefits and risks for each individual. It includes questions such as these: What is your cholesterol level? Have you (or a relative) had breast cancer? Do you frequently engage in exercise? Did your mother ever break any bones late in life?

Using mathematical models to assign numbers to each risk factor, Col can then generate a personalized benefit/risk profile for each woman to consider. The patient will be able to weigh the seriousness of one risk against another and to compare those risks to the health risks that accompany the therapy itself. Col's work is supported in part by a grant from the PhRMA Foundation.

MATH AND GENETICS THE NEXT REVOLUTION

Teresa Przytycka, Ph.D. dreams of using her talents in mathematics and computer science to understand basic features about the design and behavior of genes and proteins. She grew up in Poland and recalls, "One of the things that influenced me most was reading a biography of Marie Curie. Curie is a hero in Poland and when I read an account of her life, written by her own daughter, I knew I wanted to be like her." Przytycka already has numerous published reports in mathematics and computer science to her credit. Her current ambition is to become fluent in genetics so she can unravel some of the important health information that is locked in the human genome.

With a grant from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Przytycka is studying genes and proteins at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore. The fund has set aside twelve million dollars to foster the development and productivity of young researchers, and to help them make the critical transitions to become independent investigators.

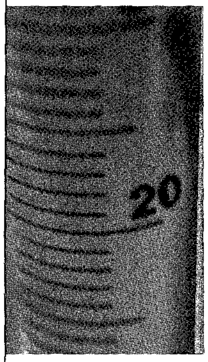
"This grant was fundamental in helping me move into a new field" says Przytycka, who is using algorithms (mathematical descriptions of computational procedures) to study the shape of proteins. "The way a protein looks is directly related to what the protein does in the body," she says. She wants to know why.

Przytycka's training will include a stint at The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) in nearby Rockville, Maryland, which has a collaborative relationship with Hopkins. TIGR is one of the world's leading genome centers. Genome sequencing requires the analysis of massive amounts of data and that, in turn, depends on advanced mathematics and supercomputers. Przytycka should be in her element.

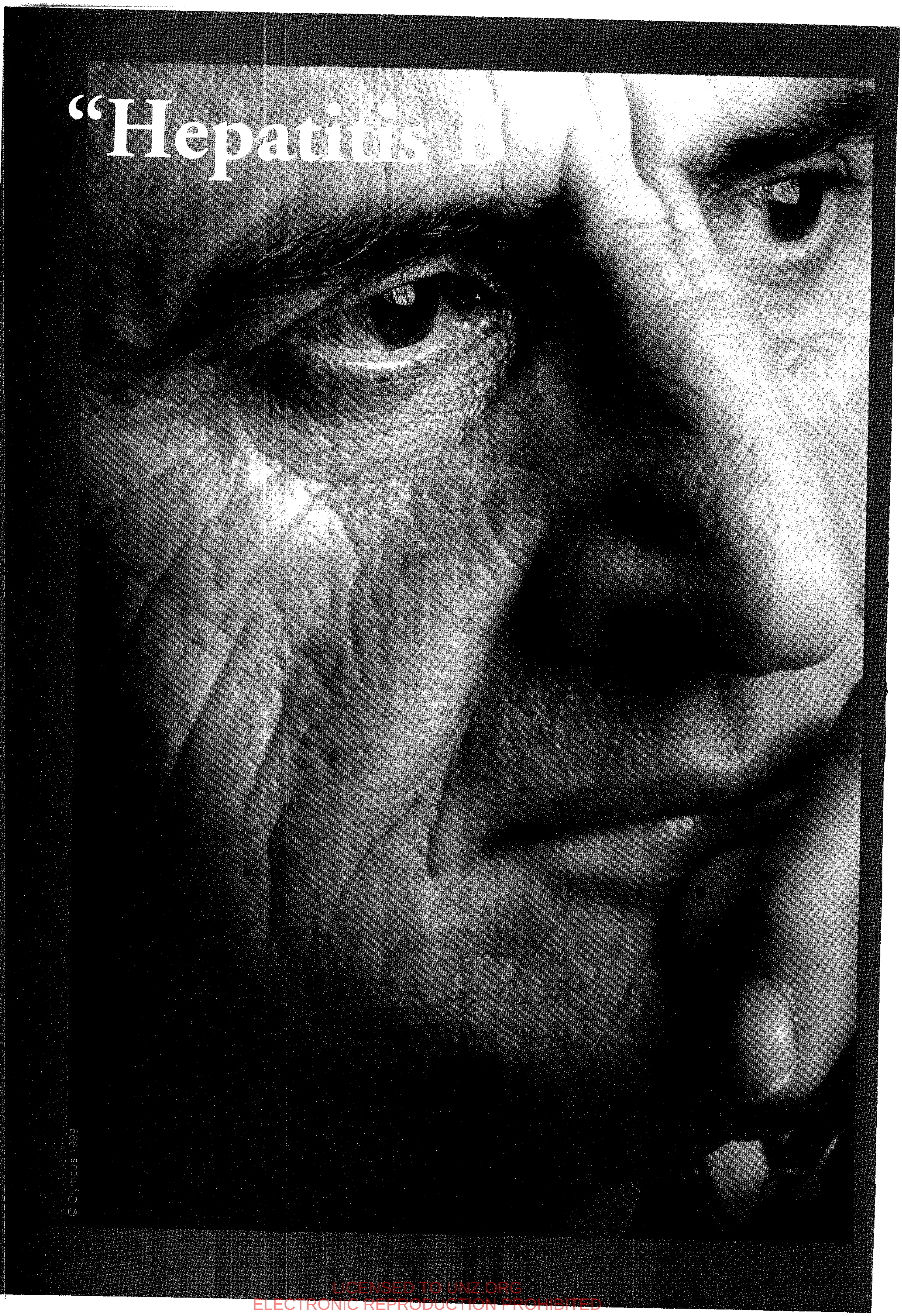
OUTWITTING MUTANT GENES

DuPont, known worldwide as an innovative chemical company, is taking new initiatives in basic biology and drug discovery as it consolidates plans to be a major player in the pharmaceutical industry in the twenty-first century. Just within the past few months, DuPont Pharmaceuticals recruited thirty-eight-year-old David Pompliano, Ph.D. to lead research on new ways to disarm pathogenic microbes. "One of the big medical problems today is microbes that become resistant to antibiotics," Pompliano observes. "Infections that used to be readily cured now persist to produce a range of serious consequences." Genes encode proteins that are responsible for the survival of bacteria, and antibiotics target key proteins. But the genes are rapidly mutating all the time, and even a single, isolated mutation can lead to high-level resistance if the antibiotic only inactivates a single protein. To minimize the likelihood of such resistance, Pompliano will be targeting what he calls "families of related proteins," and then searching for drugs that will knock out multiple family members simultaneously.

Pompliano, whose professional interest in microbes is matched by experience in the behavior of tumors, will also lead new work at DuPont Pharmaceuticals in oncology. "Cancer drugs and antibacterials pose the same mutational challenge," he says, referring to the fact that highly mutable tumor cells develop resistance to chemotherapy just as microbial mutations lead to antibiotic resistance. Here, too, the challenge is to come up with a strategy



“Hepatitis B



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and Hepatoma.”

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You spiked a fever, your muscles ached, the appetite was gone, you felt lethargic, you vomited, you were sure you had the flu. You weren't that lucky.

Silence. You questioned seeing your doctor. Your weight dropped, your stomach racked with anguish, you became anemic and jaundiced, nauseous, and even thinner.

Something else was lurking besides Hepatitis B. But you were in the dark. You didn't know what you'd been dealt or the chances you had or the hope. Until.

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You have both Hepatitis B and Hepatoma, a cancerous liver.

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Reach out for all the support and encouragement you can muster. The Center for Disease Control & Prevention's web site is www.cdc.gov; The World Health Organization's is www.who.int; Hepatitis Central's is www.hepatitis-central.com; The American Liver Foundation's is gi.ucsf.edu/alf.html.

Life doesn't have to follow this scenario. Get to know how one can catch Hepatitis B: infected blood, semen, vaginal fluid, saliva, tears, breast milk, open sores. Confide in your doctor early on. Take an alpha feto protein blood test. Get an abdominal ultrasound and a CT scan. Avoid alcohol and drugs. Avoid sharing razors, toothbrushes and pierced earrings. Use condoms.

The good news: once infected and recovered (90% of us recover in a few months) you'll never get Hepatitis B again.

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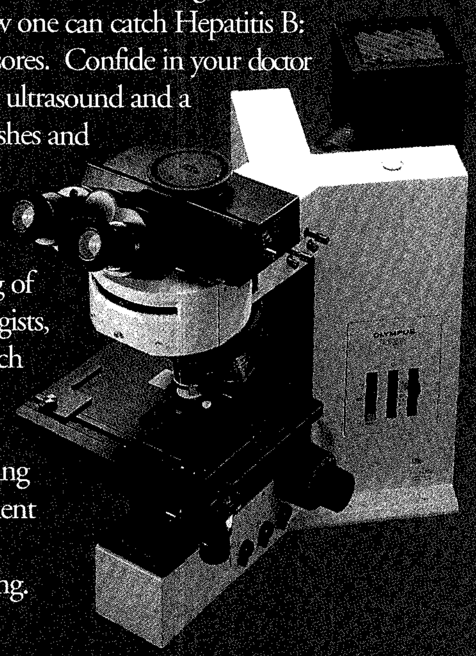

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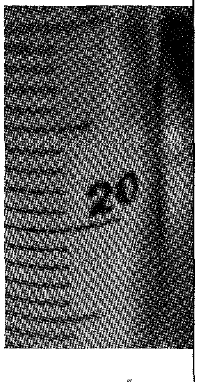

that will decrease the likelihood that resistance to drugs will occur.

Pompliano's research team will tackle cancer through research on angiogenesis—the process by which cells stimulate the growth of vessels that provide nourishment to the tumor. If it's blood supply is cut off, a tumor will die. "Cells of the blood vessels are not themselves cancerous, and thus are not so unstable or mutagenic as the cancer cells are," says Pompliano. "By targeting these normal, genetically stable vascular cells, the chances are better that resistance to drugs can be avoided. The promise in this area is too great to let it slide."

IN PRAISE OF PATHOLOGISTS

Not long ago, several Olympus America executives from its Scientific Equipment Division were at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York watching one of the hospital's pathologists at work in his clinical laboratory. The doctor was using an Olympus BX series microscope to investigate the status of a tumor that had just been removed from a patient's body. Says Daniel Biondi, senior vice-president, "The patient was still on the operating table, and already the pathologist was examining frozen sections of her ovarian tumor that had just come from the cryostat (a device that freezes and finely slices biopsied tissue). While the executives were present, the pathologist was able to call in a diagnosis that helped the surgeon decide how to complete the operation.

"It was stunning, and it was all live," says Biondi. "It brought home to us just how important pathologists are in medicine. These men and women—often called doctors' doctors because of their critical role in diagnosing diseases—are among the unsung heroes of medicine," Biondi says. Thus was born a new program, "Unsung Heroes," through which Olympus intends to honor these lesser-known diagnosticians. High-power microscopes are the pathologist's most important technical tool. Olympus, using cutting-edge technology, manufactures some of the finest scopes. And so, the company has decided to provide high-end Olympus BX40 clinical microscopes to deserving pathologists who will be identified in a nationwide search.

Unsung Heroes awards will go to pathologists who have made dramatic or key diagnoses or important research discoveries, as well as to those who have developed new tests or teaching methods. In addition, Olympus hopes to identify dedicated pathologists who are working with the poor and underserved in our society. State-of-the-art microscopes are very expensive but they can be lifesaving tools. The recipients of the first Unsung Heroes awards will be announced at the annual meeting of the College of American Pathologists in New Orleans this fall.

TALKING THE TALK

A physician may conduct 150,000 medical interviews in the course of a typical career and the information exchanged may be critical to the patient's health and prospects for recovery. Yet communicating effectively with patients has received short shrift in the nation's medical schools and training programs. The Bayer Institute for Health Care Communications aims to redress this imbalance in three ways: by advocating aggressively for the fundamental importance of doctor/patient communication; by sponsoring innovative research; and by offering "hands-on" communications workshops.

Most patients visit a doctor with a host of anxieties, but physicians tend to focus only on the presenting symptom or primary reason for the visit: an infection? a stomach disorder? a rapid heartbeat? "Doctors are not trained to see beyond the primary ailment," says Associate Director Maysel Kemp White, Ph.D. "We train doctors to not only ask 'Why are you here?' but also 'What else is the matter?' as many times as it takes to get to the end of a patient's concerns." The institute stresses that fruitful communication is both art and science. It is a skill that must be learned and mastered. More than a hundred medical centers, health maintenance organizations, and even the vast Department of Veterans Affairs apparently agree.

GREAT IDEAS come to people in all sorts of places – the laboratory, the classroom, even the shower. Bristol-Myers Squibb knows wherever inspiration strikes, freedom helps make it possible.

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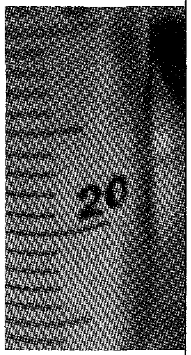


Since 1989, the nonprofit institute, founded and supported by the pharmaceutical division of the Bayer Corporation, has conducted more than 2,750 workshops for more than 40,000 clinicians in all stages of their careers. "Because research has shown that lectures seldom change communication behaviors, workshops are interactive and experiential rather than didactic," says White.

The Bayer Institute has contributed approximately $600,000 since 1993 to attract new investigators and jump-start research studies in the burgeoning field of health-care communications. In addition, investigators at the institute also conduct original research if a topic piques their curiosity. Maysel Kemp White has recently completed a study focused on improving communication for women with breast disease. "Traditionally, doctors did not treat patients as partners," explains White. "But we now know that when there's a true partnership, patients have better health outcomes. Even in a situation where there's no hope for recovery, patients' quality of life will be improved," she says.

One of the nation's great communicators, former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop has cautioned that providing good primary care and prevention "calls for physicians with communication skills of the highest order." He added, "The Bayer Institute, through its education, research, and advocacy, is making a significant contribution to this endeavor."

LOOKING FORWARD

When Congress created Medicare in 1965, prescription drug benefits were not included because drugs played nowhere near the central role in the prevention and treatment of disease that they do today. But the development of useful drugs has been one of the most significant accomplishments in medicine during the past thirty or forty years, a fact brought home in the current debate about including prescription drugs in the Medicare program.

"I honor the research and development of new drugs by our pharmaceutical companies," said President Clinton last month in Michigan, noting that "the government spends billions of dollars every year supporting such research, and we should." This topic is much on the President's mind as he debates with Congress over how to spend the nation's billions of dollars of budget surplus. Clinton ranks biomedical research right alongside education, defense, and the environment as a national priority that ought to receive a slice of the surplus pie. Long an advocate for health-related research, the President, in his 1998 State of the Union Address, proposed a "Twenty-first Century Research Fund for pathbreaking scientific inquiry—the largest funding increase in history for the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the National Cancer Institute." Appealing directly to the American people, Clinton asked them to support his proposal so that, as he put it, "Ours will be the generation that finally wins the war against cancer, and begins a revolution in our fight against all deadly diseases."

AN OUNCE OF RESEARCH IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE

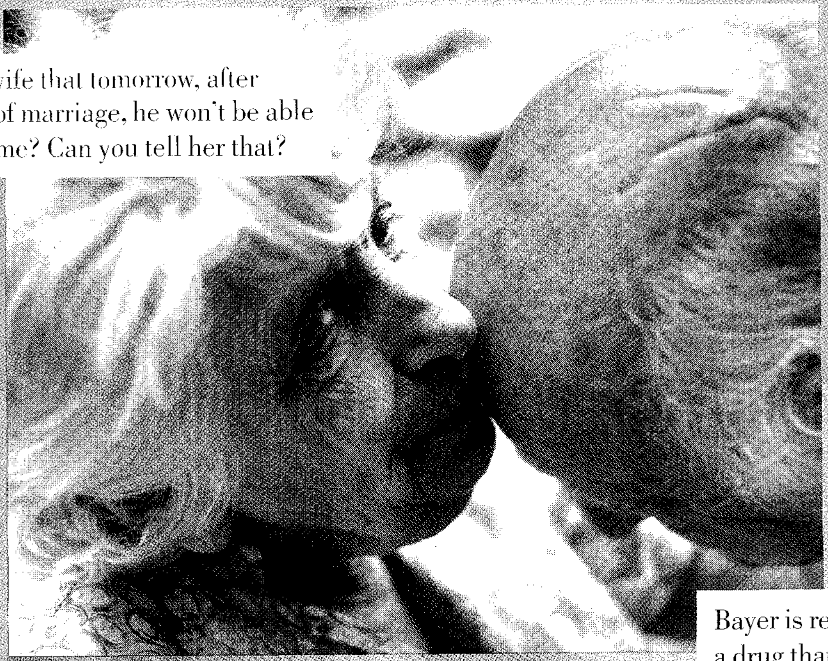
At a recent conference sponsored by the Funding First program of the Mary Woodard Lasker Trust—an initiative that seeks to stimulate the nation's financial commitment to medical research—distinguished scientists, budget analysts, and public policy experts engaged in a spirited debate about petitioning Congress to devote a fraction of the anticipated, multibillion dollar budget surplus to medical and health-related research.

Our congressional leaders propose using some of the surplus to save social security and Medicare and some to bolster our national defense. Lasker/Funding First thinks it is imperative to allocate a portion of the remaining surplus for research. The public apparently agrees. Recent polls indicate that there is broad support throughout the country for doubling the federal investment in medical research over the next five years. Funding First believes that good health stems from innovative research and that our lives may depend on it.

To read the conference report or for more information about Funding First, visit **www.fundingfirst.org.** Information about the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation can be found at **www.laskerfoundation.org.**

(Washington-based writer Barbara J. Culliton was the founding editor of *Nature Medicine Magazine*.
This is her third consecutive contribution to the "Celebrities of Science" series.)

CAN YOU tell his wife that tomorrow, after more than 40 years of marriage, he won't be able to remember her name? Can you tell her that?



Bayer is researching a drug that slows the rate of memory loss suffered by many Alzheimer's patients.

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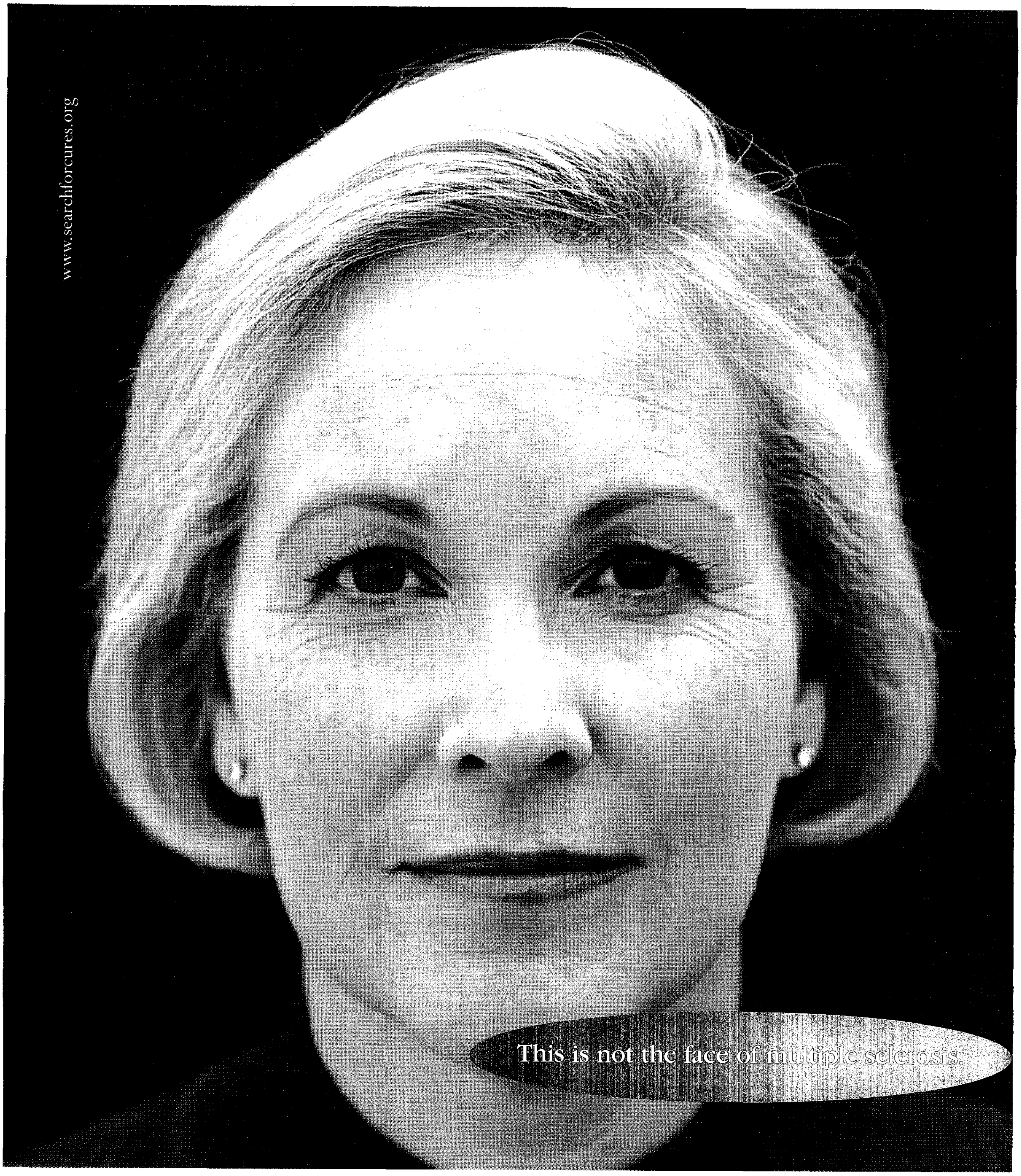

www.searchforcures.org
This is not the face of multiple sclerosis.

It's the face of Connie Pierce. She's married to her high school sweetheart, has twin daughters and a job she loves. She has also been fighting multiple sclerosis (MS) for a decade. She credits family support, a sense of humor and advances in medicines from America's pharmaceutical companies with helping to dramatically slow the progression of her MS. Pharmaceutical company researchers continue to make breakthroughs and won't stop until there's a cure. So people like Connie can live and love and laugh for years to come.

America's Pharmaceutical Companies

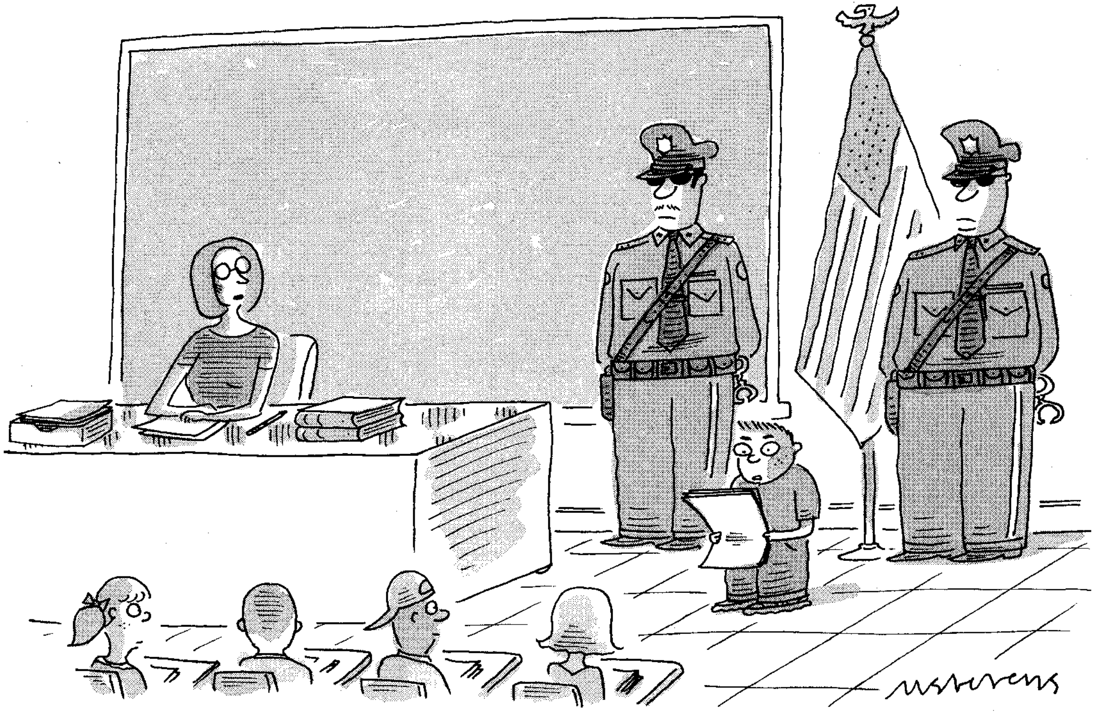
Leading the way in the search for cures

cells in a dense background of healthy ones, they can easily be missed, particularly by overworked readers. These problems led to the establishment of national guidelines eleven years ago, and since then technicians have been forbidden to read more than a hundred slides a day. Some experts think that number is still too high, and, indeed, studies have shown that technicians are most accurate in their assessments at the beginning of their shift, with their acuity waning significantly over time. To make things worse, government inspectors have found widespread violations when they visit Pap-testing centers.

Even when a cytology laboratory is well run, though, Pap remains a poor screening test. What compensates for its error rate is the frequency with which it is administered. The progression to cancer generally takes place over a period of between ten and twenty years, so having a regular Pap test—once a year is the standard practice—improves the chance that any pathology will eventually be detected. Unfortunately, some lesions become cancerous quite swiftly—sometimes within a year or two. In fact, fifty per cent of all women who have developed cervical cancer have had a Pap test within five years of the diagnosis. And at the meeting of the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists held in San Francisco this spring a great deal of attention was paid to the need to improve early-detection techniques. The Food and Drug Administration has approved a new method, called ThinPrep Pap Test, which is designed to get around many of the technical problems of preparing the Pap slides. Rather than being deposited on glass slides by hand, the cell samples from the spatula and the cotton swab are suspended in a liquid solution. A machine then filters out the cells from the suspension and deposits them automatically in a thin layer on the glass slides. This uniform monolayer is easier for a technician to inspect, and the process removes contaminants like mucus, bacteria, and yeast. Though the ThinPrep method improves the detection of precancerous lesions, it is estimated to add fifteen to twenty-five dollars to the cost of a standard Pap test (which is usually around fifteen dollars), and that's a concern for some H.M.O.s. The F.D.A. has also approved two new devices—PAPNET and the AutoPap Primary Screening System, in which computers display potentially abnormal cells for review and analysis by pathologists. There has been some dispute about how much accuracy is gained through the use of these automated systems, and, as with ThinPrep, some insurers have balked at the additional expense (usually between three and ten dollars).

One way to improve on Pap diagnosis is to test directly for the papilloma virus. Many physicians believe that combining the Pap test with direct virus testing may prove particularly useful when a Pap test comes back with its most common indeterminate result, called ASCUS—atypical squamous cells of undetermined significance. "That is a namby-pamby diagnosis, because in some women it indicates real pathology and in others it's meaningless," Palefsky says. DNA testing for papilloma isn't yet widely available but may become so in the next few years; several companies have developed kits that will tell doctors when carcinogenic strains are present. From five to ten per cent of ASCUS readings—and there are two million such readings a year—are later found to indicate precancerous or cancerous lesions.

That proved to be the case with Mira Allen, a high-school teacher I cared for several years ago. She had few risk factors for cervical cancer—only one sexual partner prior to her husband—and she had had a regular Pap test. The first sign of an abnormality was an ASCUS reading when she was thirty years old. Mira and her husband, who were well educated and eager to begin a family, were worried by the indeterminate reading. But the doctor's advice was to wait another six months before repeating the test, since many benign conditions cause atypical cells, and even if the test did signal an early lesion it was likely to be a slow-growing one. The second Pap test was no longer equivocal: the slide revealed the signature bloated cells with large coal-black nuclei. So the gynecologist performed a colposcopy, and within the lip of Mira's cervix he found a shiny area with a mosaic surface that resembled ivory tiles. A biopsy showed deeply invasive



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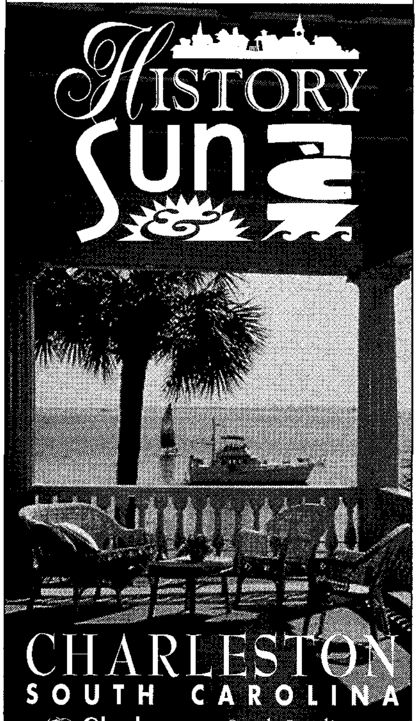

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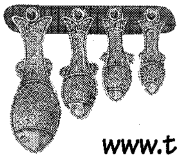

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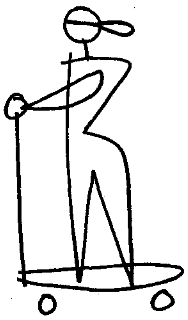
cervical cancer. She underwent surgery, in which the cervix, the uterus, and the adjoining lymph nodes were removed, and then had radiation therapy to destroy any remaining cancer cells. Mira suffered the frequent complications resulting from the treatment—diarrhea and inflammation of the bladder—but for three years there was hope that the treatment had worked. Then she developed lower-back pain. X-rays showed a metastasis to the spine; a CAT scan revealed lesions in her liver. Radiation therapy was given to alleviate the lower-back pain by shrinking the tumor around her spinal cord, and Mira was referred to me for chemotherapy.

Mira's husband sat tensely at her side as she recounted her social and medical history in a soft voice. Because both she and her husband had read about the disease, and knew that the old medical textbooks linked it to multiple sex partners and a history of other venereal diseases, the couple watched my face for signs of disdain. But she was hardly the stereotype of the old medical textbooks. All it would have taken was one partner who carried a carcinogenic strain of papilloma virus, such as type 16.

I treated Mira with high doses of combination chemotherapy, but the drugs checked the advancing cancer only temporarily. Within a few months, the tumor had spread to her lungs. At the age of thirty-four, Mira Allen died, the victim of a carcinogenic papilloma virus.



But what about her husband? Was he at risk, or putting others at risk? At the time, these thoughts hadn't crossed my mind. "Doctors ignore the male," Palefsky says. "When we see someone with syphilis or gonorrhea, we always test the partner. But a man with, say, human papilloma virus 16 or 18, each strongly associated with cervical cancer, can walk around and infect other women without knowing it." The Centers for Disease Control do not recommend testing the sexual partners of a woman with the papilloma virus, on the ground that the partners will already be infected and that there is no cure. In Palefsky's clinic, though, he and his colleagues make a point of seeking out the male partners of infected women. When appropriate, they'll perform a colposcopic examination of the penis: as with cervical colposcopy, the surfaces around and within the urethra are painted with a vinegarlike solution and the distinctive lesions are biopsied. Palefsky acknowledges that this is not standard practice. But, he argues, papilloma virus in men is associated with precancerous lesions of the penis and can progress, albeit at a very low frequency, to penile cancer. "People say don't bother, because the majority of infections are ultimately combatted by the immune system," Palefsky told me. "But such a man, when still infected, is a public-health risk to other women, and what if we can prevent this, as well as his own penile cancer, through early detection?"

These concerns arise with gay men, too. The epithelium of the anus and the anal canal is similar to that of the vagina and cervix, with a transformation zone at the junction between outer squamous cells and internal glandular cells. Among sexually active urban gay men, about sixty per cent of those who are H.I.V.-negative carry the papilloma virus in the anal area; nearly ninety-five per cent who are H.I.V.-positive have the papilloma virus. Gay men have been found to carry the same range of genital papilloma viruses—including the cancer-associated types 16 and 18—that women do. And sexually active gay men often carry many different papilloma-virus types. "In the anus," Palefsky says, "it's papilloma-virus soup."

Extrapolating from a recent study in San Francisco, researchers estimate that thirty-five out of every hundred thousand H.I.V.-negative gay men have anal cancer. This is about the same rate of cervical cancer that was found in women before they began to receive routine Pap tests. (Among H.I.V.-positive men, Palefsky estimates the rate to be twice as high.) "If I were a general practitioner for gay men, I would do an anal Pap test on all my patients," Palefsky told me. Anal cancer resulting from the papilloma virus is also a risk for women who engage in anal intercourse or in frottage with their buttocks. These women, Palefsky believes, also need to receive regular anal Pap testing. Having pioneered

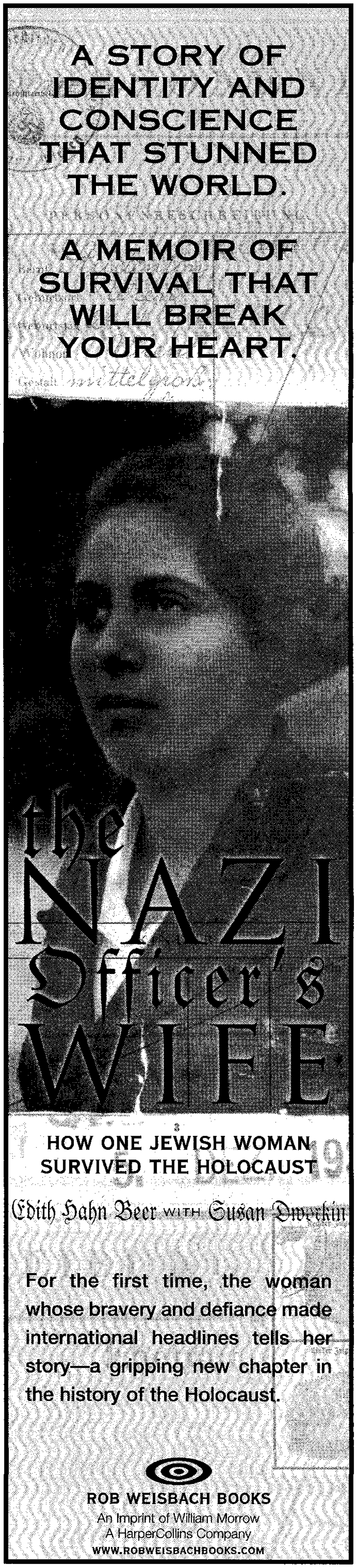
"Now, this is a Francis Ford Coppola. We still haven't been here quite long enough to be drinkable ourselves."

• •

this technique in San Francisco, he is now training physicians around the nation to perform anal Pap tests.

THE most effective way to protect against the papilloma virus and prevent anal and genital cancers would, of course, be a vaccine. Individuals would need to be immunized before becoming sexually active. The benefits of such a vaccine would be particularly significant in the developing world, where women's health services are minimal. But designing one will be difficult. People's immune response appears to be specific to the type of papilloma virus, so that a person protected against, say, type 16 would still be susceptible to other strains associated with genital cancer, such as 18. Recent data suggest that there are also subtypes or variants within type 16, and perhaps within other types as well. Moreover, the types of papilloma virus associated with cervical cancer vary by geographic area. Types 39 and 59 are most prevalent in Central and South America. Type 45 is common in West Africa. With the increase in travel and emigration, these carcinogenic strains will probably start to emerge in the United States and Europe. So a vaccine with a cocktail of several types would have to be created. Still, two companies, MedImmune and Merck, have begun early-phase studies on the safety of vaccinating women against cancer-linked genital papilloma viruses. There are also attempts to develop a so-called therapeutic vaccine, which would boost the immune system of someone who was already infected. Such vaccines would target the E6 and E7 proteins, those viral proteins that sabotage cell-growth regulation.

Jennifer West is being followed closely with Pap tests and a colposcopy every four months. After her diagnosis, she informed her boyfriend of her infection. He was both dismayed and more than a little defensive. He had never heard of the papilloma virus, and protested that he had no symptoms of a venereal disease. Jenny explained that she hadn't, either, and that the virus could have passed between them despite their use of condoms. Cells from his urethra tested positive for type 16, but there were no discernible lesions, and nothing to excise. "All that the two of us can do is wait, and hope it will pass," Jenny said. Many experts now believe that, as with herpes, once you are infected with papilloma, you are infected for life. There is no treatment. In many cases, an active infection is controlled by the immune system and becomes dormant. No one can predict whether, or when, the virus will become active again. ◆



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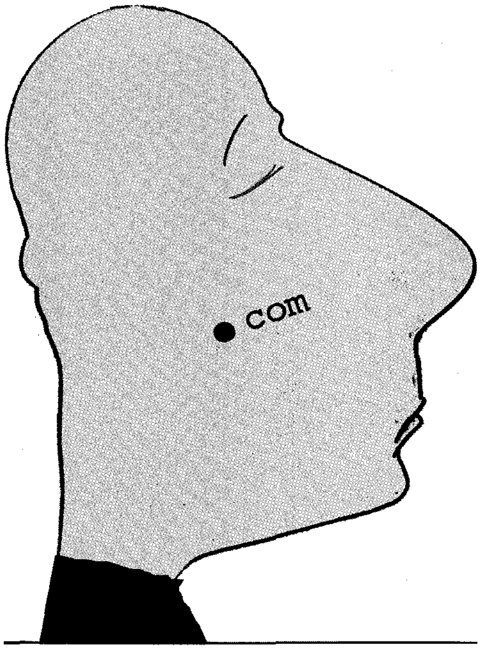
SHOUTS & MURMURS

THE A-LIST E-LIST

BY DAVID BROOKS

I SPEND my days trying to contribute to a more just, caring, and environmentally sensitive society, but, like most Americans, I'm always on the lookout for subtle ways to make myself seem socially superior. So I was thrilled recently to learn about E-name dropping, a new and extremely petty form of one-upmanship made possible by recent strides in information technology.



I first became aware of this new status ploy when a colleague sent out a mass message. "Dear friends," his E-mail began. But before I could go on to the text my eye was drawn up to the list of other people it had been sent to. My friend had apparently sent this message—it was a request for help on an article—to his entire E-mail address book. There were three hundred and four names, listed alphabetically, along with their E-mail addresses. It was like a roster of young media meritocrats. There were newsweek.coms, wsj.coms, nytimes.coms, as well as your assorted berkeley.edus, stanford.edus, microsoft.coms, and even a UN.org.

I realized that I had stumbled across the *Social Register* of the information age. We all carry our own select social clubs on our hard drives, and when we send out a mass mailing we can flaunt our splendiferous connections to arouse the envy of friend and foe alike. It's as if you were walking down the street with your Rolodex taped to your lapel—only better, since having an E-mail friendship with someone suggests that you are trading chatty badinage, not just exchanging stiff missives under a formal letterhead.

So in theory a strategic striver could structure his E-mail address list to reveal the entire trajectory of his career ascent. He could include a few of his early thesis advisers—groton.org, yale.edu, oxford.ac.uk—then a few internship-era mentors—imf.org, whitehouse.gov—and, finally, a few social/professional contacts—say, davosconference.com or trilat.org. When he inflicts this list on his friends' in-boxes, they will be compelled, like unwilling list archeologists, to retrace his perfect life, triumph by triumph.

My friend with the three-hundred-and-four-name list hadn't exploited the full potentialities of the genre, so I cast about for other lists and began to analyze them. I learned a lot from these lists. For example, my view of *The Nation's* columnist Eric Alterman has been transformed by the knowledge that he has just stopped using "Tomseaver" as part of his E-mail address. But, frankly, reading through the address lists of my friends, I found that there were longueurs. Entire passages were filled with names of insignificant people, such as family members I'd never heard of. I came to realize, as Capability Brown must have, that in the making of any beautiful vista pruning is key.

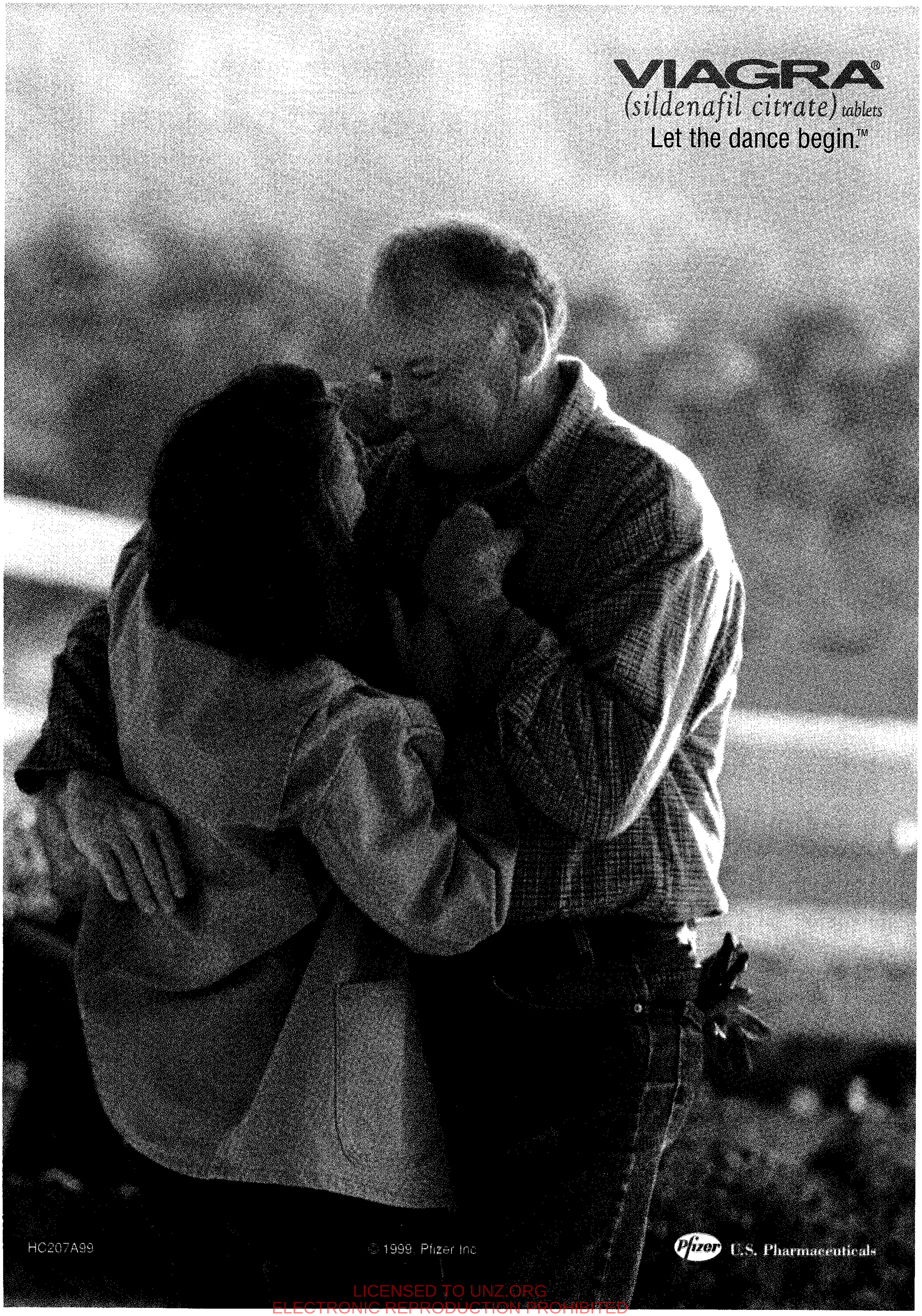
If Aristotle were alive, he would note that there are four types of E-mail lists. There are lists that remind you that the sender went to a better college than you did. There are lists that remind you that he has a better job than you do. There are those that remind you that he has more sex than you do. And, finally, there are those that remind you that he is better than you in every respect: spiritually, professionally, and socially.

I have begun fantasizing about assembling the mother of all E-mail lists, the sort that would be accumulated by a modern Renaissance man. Such a list would be studded with jewels (HisHoliness@vatican.com, QEII@windsor.org). But, more than that, it would suggest a series of high achievements across the full range of human endeavor. It would include whopping hints about mysterious other lives (coupboy@theagency.gov, Ahmed@mujahedin.com). It would reveal intimate connections with the great but socially selective (JDSal@aol.com, Solzhenits@archi.org). Of course, I wouldn't want only celebrities on my list; that would be vulgar. I would leave room for talk-show bookers, upper-bracket realtors, Sherpas, airline presidents, night-club publicists, rain-forest tour guides, underprivileged kids, members of the Gotti family, and a rotating contingent of the people I actually know, for whose edification the whole list has been constructed in the first place.

To take advantage of this list, I would need excuses to send out mass mailings as frequently as possible. I would have to change my address a lot ("From now on you can reach me at genius24@MacArthurgrant.com . . ."). I would send out a lot of general queries ("Does anybody know who is handling Ike Berlin's estate? I'm trying to find a first edition of the complete works of Hérzen . . ."). And I'd send out a few accidental mass mailings by hitting the Reply All button by "mistake" ("Your Holiness, it turns out I can't make it to Rome Tuesday. Maybe somebody else can bring the beer and soda . . .").

No longer would I be the ninety-eight-pound cyberweakling that I am now. Alec Baldwin would start sending me dirty jokes in hopes of making it onto my E-mail list. People would actually begin replying to my messages. The fact is, in the new information age, we can now be snobs on a scale never dreamed of by our ancestors. Is this a great time to be alive, or what? ♦

ISTVAN BANYAI



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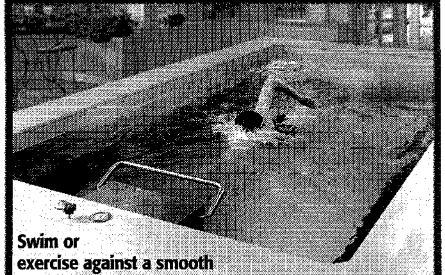

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LETTER FROM FLORENCE

THE HERETIC'S DAUGHTER

A startling correspondence reveals a new portrait of Galileo.

BY DAVA SOBEL

GALILEO GALILEI fathered three children—two daughters and a son—all born of his liaison with Marina Gamba, of Venice. The eldest, Virginia, mirrored Galileo's own brilliance, industry, and sensibility, and by virtue of these qualities became his confidante. Her sister, Livia, in contrast, maintained a strange, perhaps psychotic silence, and the behavior of their brother, Vincenzio, was frequently sullen and selfish.

Virginia entered the world in the summer heat of a new century, on August 13, 1600—the same year that the Dominican friar Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in Rome for insisting on heresies tied to his belief that the earth travelled around the sun instead of remaining motionless at the center of the universe. In a world that did not yet know its place, Galileo would engage in a similar cosmic conflict with the Church. Because Galileo never married their mother, he deemed his daughters unmarriageable, and soon after Virginia's thirteenth birthday he placed both girls at the Convent of San Matteo, in Arcetri, about a mile south of Florence, where they lived the rest of their lives in poverty and seclusion. (Vincenzio, legitimatized by a fiat of Cosimo de' Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, went on to study law at the University of Pisa and married a wealthy woman, who bore him three sons.)

When Virginia professed her nun's vows, at the age of sixteen, she took the name Maria Celeste—a gesture that acknowledged her father's fascination with the stars—and throughout her life of prayer and penance she remained devoted to Galileo as though to a patron saint. He doted on her in return, captivated by what he called her "exquisite mind," her "singular goodness," and her "most tender attachment" to him. Since she never left her convent and he was not always free to visit her there, they carried on a lifelong correspondence, from which a hundred and twenty-four of her letters survive. Every page is redolent of daily life, down to the pain of toothache and the smell of vinegar, and many passages reveal the darkest side of the convent's hidden world, as on November 22, 1629, when she wrote:

> I hope to ease my mind, and at the same time to be excused by you, for dashing off my last two letters so randomly, instead of writing in the proper manner. For truly I was half beside myself, shaken by the terror aroused in me and in all of us by our novice mistress, who, overpowered by those moods or frenzies of hers, tried twice in recent days to kill herself.
>
> The first time she struck her head and face against the ground with such force that she became monstrously deformed; the second time she stabbed herself thirteen times in one night, leaving two wounds in her throat, two in her stomach, and the others in her abdomen. I leave you to imagine, Sire, the horror that gripped us when we found her body all bloody and battered.
>
> But we were even more stupefied at how, as seriously injured as she was, she made the noise that drew us to enter her cell, asked for the confessor, and then in confession handed over to the priest the instrument she had used, so as to prevent any of us from seeing it (although, as far as we can conjecture, it was a pocket knife); thus it appears that she was crazy and cunning at the same time, and the only possible conclusion is that these are mysterious judgments of the Lord, Who still keeps her alive, when for every natural cause she should surely have died, as the wounds were all perilous ones, according to the surgeon; in the wake of these events we have guarded her continuously day and night. Now that the rest of us are recovered, by the grace of blessed God, and she is tied in her bed, albeit with the same deliriums, we continue to live in fear of some new outburst.

When I visited Maria Celeste's convent—only part of which still stands, and now houses seven Carmelite fathers—I walked over the roughly pentagonal gray flagstones in the courtyard, wondering if the novice mistress had perhaps chosen this pavement to punish herself. Maria Celeste's detailed accounts leave a great many questions unanswered. On first learning of her letters, I assumed, as most people do, that Galileo's replies must lie concealed somewhere—perhaps in the recesses of the Vatican Library. In fact, the archives

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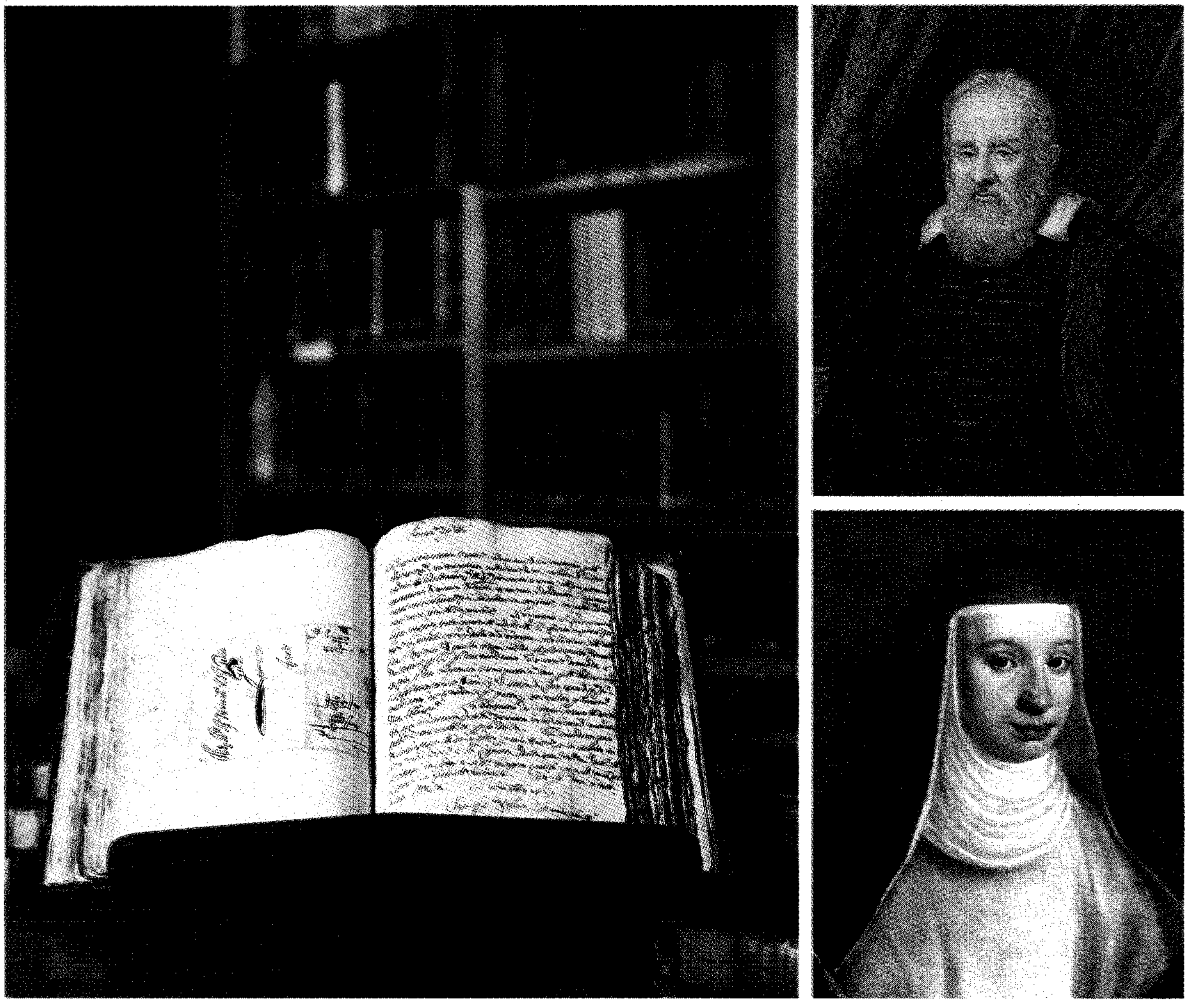
have been combed repeatedly by religious authorities and authorized researchers, who finally have come to believe that the Mother Abbess must have destroyed the letters of a man "vehemently suspected" of heresy by the Roman Inquisition. Because of the historical importance of any paper signed by Galileo, not to mention the prices that such articles have commanded for the past two centuries, it is hard to imagine any place where a packet of his letters could still lie hidden.



Clockwise from left: the bound letters of Galileo's daughter Virginia, which recast the astronomer's clash with the Church; Galileo, near the time of his trial; Virginia Galilei, who sent her father elixirs and pills to ward off the bubonic plague.

Numerous commentaries, plays, poems, early lectures, and manuscripts of Galileo's have also disappeared, and are known to have existed only through specific mentions in more than two thousand letters from his contemporary correspondents which have been preserved. Fortunately, his five most important published books survive, along with at least one of his original handmade telescopes (another is ascribed to him)—and even parts of his body embalmed after death. (The middle finger of his right hand, encased in a gilded glass egg atop an inscribed marble pedestal, can be viewed at the Museum of the History of Science in Florence.)

Of Sister Maria Celeste, however, only her letters remain. Bound together in a single volume with covers of both cardboard and leather, the frayed, deckle-edged pages now reside among the rare manuscripts in Florence's National Central Library. The handwriting throughout is still legible, though the once black ink has turned brown. Some letters bear annotations in Galileo's hand, for he occasionally jotted notes in the margins about the things she said, and at other times he made seemingly unrelated calculations or geometric diagrams in the blank spaces around his address on the verso. Several of the sheets are marred by tiny holes, or are torn, darkened by acid or mildew, or smeared with spilled oil. Others are water-blurred, some having obviously ventured through the rain, and some look more likely tearstained. After nearly four hundred years, red sealing wax still sticks to the folded corners of the paper.

These letters, which have never been published in unabridged translation, recast Galileo's story. They recolor the personality and conflict of a figure whose seventeenth-century clash with Catholic doctrine still echoes. "A tragic mutual incomprehension," Pope John Paul II observed in 1992, "has been interpreted as the reflection of a fundamental opposition between science and faith."

Yet the Galileo of Sister Maria Celeste's letters recognized no such division. He remained a good Catholic, who believed in the power of prayer, and endeavored always to conform his duty as a scientist with the destiny of his soul. "Whatever the course of our lives," Galileo wrote in 1612, while pondering the nature of sunspots with a correspondent in Germany, "we should receive them as the highest gift from the hand of God, in which equally reposed the power to do nothing whatever for us."

GALILEO was born in Pisa in 1564 and started his career as a professor of mathematics, teaching at Pisa and then at Padua. He was one of the first philosophers to describe the natural world in mathematical terms, and is considered the father of experimental physics. Most people, however, tie his name to the greatest series of astronomical discoveries ever claimed by a single individual. In 1609, when Virginia was nine, he built a telescope, set it in the garden behind his house, and turned it skyward. He saw the Milky Way resolved into a swath of densely packed stars; mountains and valleys on the moon; and four attendant bodies travelling regularly around Jupiter, like a planetary system in miniature. "I render infinite thanks to God," Galileo wrote, "for being so kind as to make me alone the first observer of marvels kept hidden in obscurity for all previous centuries."

These discoveries transformed Galileo's life. He won an appointment as Chief Mathematician and Philosopher to Cosimo de' Medici in 1610, and moved to Florence to assume his position at court. Taking his children along with him, he left behind Marina Gamba, his companion of twelve years, who married another suitor in Padua. Galileo came to be lionized as another Columbus, but he also attracted enmity and suspicion for having trespassed on holy ground. His observations, after all, lent credence to the sun-centered universe of Copernicus, which had been introduced more than half a century previously but had foundered because of lack of evidence. And Galileo's flamboyant style of promulgating his ideas—sometimes in rough published humor, sometimes loudly at dinner parties and in staged debates—transported the new astronomy from the Latin quarters of the universities into the public arena.

In 1616, a Pope and a Cardinal Inquisitor respectfully reprimanded Galileo, warning him to curtail his forays into the supernal realms. On March 5th of that year, the Holy Congregation of the Index published an edict that expounded the official position on Copernican astronomy; namely, that it was "false and contrary to Holy Scripture." Galileo obeyed orders, silencing himself on the subject. For seven years, he turned his efforts to such pursuits as harnessing the Jovian moons in the service of navigation, in order to help sailors discover their longitude. He studied poetry and wrote literary criticism. Modifying his telescope, he developed a compound microscope. "I have observed many tiny animals with great admiration," he reported, "among which the flea is quite horrible, the gnat and the moth very beautiful; and with great satisfaction I have seen how flies and other little animals can walk attached to mirrors, upside down."

In 1623, however, Galileo found a good reason to return to the sun-centered universe: a new Pope. The Supreme Pontiff Urban VIII brought to the Holy See an interest in scientific investigation not shared by his immediate predecessors. Galileo knew him personally—had shown him his telescope, and had won him to his side one night, after a banquet at the Florentine court, in a debate about why ice floats. Urban had long admired Galileo so much that he had even written a poem for him, mentioning the sights revealed by "Galileo's glass." Maria Celeste delighted with her father at this turn of events:

> The happiness I derived from the gift of the letters you sent me, Sire, written to you by that most distinguished Cardinal, now elevated to the exalted position of Supreme Pontiff, was ineffable, for his letters so clearly express the affection he has for you, and also show how highly he values your abilities. I have read and reread them, savoring them in private, and I return them to you, as you insist, without having shown them to anyone else except Suor Arcangela [her natural sister, Livia], who has joined me in drawing the utmost joy from seeing how much our father is favored by persons of such caliber.

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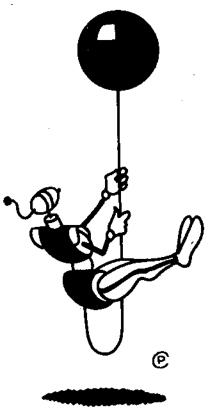
"Have you got that in bulletproof?"

THE presence of the poet Pope encouraged Galileo to proceed with a long-planned popular dissertation on the two rival theories of cosmology—the sun-centered and the earth-centered, or, in his words, the "two chief systems of the world." It might have been difficult for Sister Maria Celeste to reconcile her role as a bride of Christ with her father's position as potentially an enemy of the Catholic Church, but she approved of his endeavors, because she knew the depth of his faith. She accepted Galileo's conviction that God had dictated the Holy Scriptures to guide men's spirits but had proffered the unravelling of the universe as a challenge to their intelligence. Understanding her father's prodigious capacity in this pursuit, she prayed for his health, for his longevity, for the fulfillment of his "every just desire." As the convent's apothecary, she concocted elixirs and pills to strengthen him for his studies and minister to his recurring febrile illnesses. She sought to protect him from the bubonic plague when it struck Florence in the autumn of 1630, while Galileo was seeking a printing license for his recently completed "Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems":



> Most Beloved Lord Father
>
> I am heartsick and worried, Sire, imagining how disturbed you must be over the sudden death of your poor unfortunate worker. I assume that you will use every possible precaution to protect yourself from the danger, and I fervently urge you to make great effort in this endeavor; I further believe that you possess remedies and preventatives proportionate to the present threat, wherefore I promise not to dwell on the subject. But still with all due respect and filial confidence I will exhort you to procure the best remedy of all, which is the grace of blessed God, by means of a thorough contrition and penitence. This, without doubt, is the most efficacious medicine, not only for the soul, but for the body as well....
>
> I am writing at the seventh hour [the middle of the night]: I shall insist that you excuse me if I make mistakes, Sire, because the day does not contain one hour of time that is mine, since in addition to my other duties I have now been assigned to teach Gregorian chant to four young girls, and by Madonna's [the Mother Abbess's] orders I am responsible for the day-to-day conducting of the choir: which last creates considerable labor for me, with my poor grasp of the Latin language. It is certainly true that these exercises are very much to my liking, if only I did not also have to work; yet from all this I do derive one very good thing, which is that I never ever sit idle for even one quarter of an hour. Except that I require sufficient sleep to clear my head. If you would teach me the secret you yourself employ, Sire, for getting by on so little sleep, I would be most grateful, because in the end the seven hours that I waste sleeping seem far too many to me.

And she added in a postscript:

> The little basket, which I sent you recently with several pastries, is not mine, and therefore I wish you to return it to me.

Maria Celeste's prescription for prayer and penitence in the face of the bubonic plague meshed perfectly with prevailing wisdom, which attributed the plague to such causes as miasmas of swampy air, conjunctions of the planets, famine, beggars, and prostitutes. Prayer, at the very least, augmented the many available treatments, which included bloodletting, applying crystals of arsenic to the wrists and temples, laying small sacks of precious stones over the heart, and using unguents made from animal excrement, mustard, crushed glass, turpentine, poison ivy, and onion. The value of confession and penitence reached new heights during plague epidemics, for the disease left its victims no time in which to make amends.

Monitors working for the Florentine Magistracy of Public Health patrolled the city, sending the stricken to the plague hospitals, burning their belongings, and disinfecting and boarding up their homes—with the other family members locked inside. Behind these sealed, marked doors, the relatives were expected to wait twenty-two days for release while subsisting on allotments of bread and money distributed by the Magistracy. Those who were confined raised these supplies from the street in baskets on ropes, and lowered their corpses from the windows by the same system.

The sisters of San Matteo survived the autumn of the plague year without a single occurrence of the disease within the convent's enclosure. Undoubtedly, they benefitted from the strict precautions spelled out for religious residences by the Magistracy. These stipulated, for example, that only the nuns' closest relatives could venture near enough to speak to them, and that in any case the parlor grille that normally separated them from visitors must now be covered with a sheet of parchment or paper during all such encounters.

"I feel there is no question of your coming here to see us," Maria Celeste wrote to her father under the circumstances, "and I do not ask you to visit, because none of us could derive much pleasure from it, unable as we are to converse freely just now."

The only death recorded at San Matteo through the whole of 1630 was the late-November passing of a nun whose fever and dysentery predated

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the plague epidemic by many months.

The nuns—cold, hungry, and surrounded by danger—appealed for aid from a variety of sources through a letter-writing campaign. Maria Celeste wrote the letters, and the Abbess signed them. Their supplications began to show results on November 1st, All Saints' Day, when the dowager Grand Duchess Madama Cristina saw to it that an abundance of bread was delivered to the convent, followed soon thereafter by eighteen bushels of grain, and later by cash contributions. The Archbishop of Florence also pledged his aid. He demanded a list of names of the sisters' family members, with an eye toward asking them to provide the convent with financial support through the coming winter. Maria Celeste panicked, worrying that such a move would tax Galileo at an unfair rate, as he already gave generously. Rather than let this happen, she devised a way to restructure the finances of San Matteo so that sums of money long held privately by certain sisters' families—and all the interest that had accrued over the years—might now be called in to meet the immediate needs of the convent. Since she could not dictate strategy to the Archbishop, however, she proposed this idea to Galileo, for him to present as his own. This course eventually resulted in the desired outcome. Maria Celeste also addressed Galileo's personal and professional disappointments with prayers and exhortations, writing in early November:

> I beseech you not to grasp the knife of these current troubles and misfortunes by its sharp edge, lest you let it injure you that way; but rather, seizing it by the blunt side, use it to excise all the imperfections you may recognize in yourself; so that you rise above the obstacles, and in this fashion, just as you penetrated the heavens with the vision of a Lyncean, so will you, by piercing also through baser realms, arrive at an awareness of the vanity and fallacy of all earthly things.

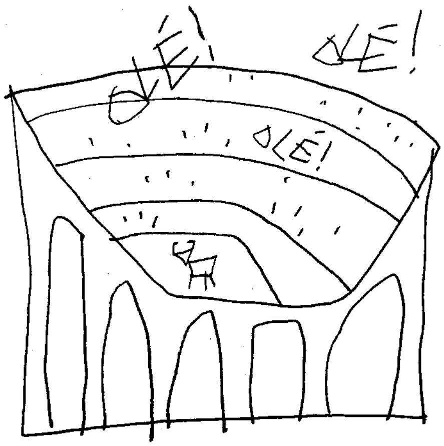
Galileo, though frustrated by impediments to publishing his "Dialogue," began to write a new book, based on studies of motion he had initiated long ago in Padua. He also kept up his scientific correspondence and was consulted regularly on projects for the Grand Duke. In December, for example, Galileo advised an architect on plans for repairing the façade of Florence's signature cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore.

Maria Celeste made a promise to her father:

> I will go on taking good care of myself, as you urge me to do. And how I do desire you to heed some of the same advice you offer me, by not immersing yourself so deeply in your studies that you jeopardize your health too markedly; for if your poor body is to serve as an instrument capable of sustaining your zest for understanding and investigating novelties, it is well that you grant it some needed rest, lest it become so depleted as to render even your powerful intellect unable to savor that nourishment it devours with such relish.

Maria Celeste plied Galileo with every new plague preventative she could fabricate in her apothecary shop or procure by other means. Although she did not explain how she managed to obtain it, she sent him a bottle of healing water from the venerated Abbess Ursula of Pistoia—a liqueur that Ursula's own followers placed on a par with holy relics and dared not distribute to outsiders. Maria Celeste could not similarly endorse another offering—an electuary of dried figs, nuts, rue leaves, and salt, "held together with as much honey as was needed"—but still she prepared it for him, pressed it on him, and prescribed its usage: "You may take it every morning, before eating, in a dose about the size of a walnut, followed immediately by drinking a little Greek or other good wine, and they say it provides a marvellous defense." Indeed, this formula carried the official endorsement of the Magistracy of Public Health.

Galileo reciprocated with periodic gifts of money and food—including meats, sweets, and even a spinach dish he cooked himself—as well as by sending her a warm quilt to replace one she had given away, miscellaneous containers and glass vials for her apothecary work, and chartreuse-colored citrons from his garden, which she returned to him as quickly as she could, candied to his liking. When he forgot to send a promised telescope, she reminded him to put it in the basket next time. Galileo apparently accompanied the tokens of his paternal love with frank praise for her abilities, though she deflected these compliments. "I am confounded to hear that you save my letters," she remarked, "and I suspect that the great love you bear me makes them seem more accomplished than they really are."



IN December of 1630, the *tramontana*—the cold wind from the Apennines—beat through Tuscany, effectively locking Galileo indoors. Unable to visit the convent, he sent news of his health via his new housekeeper, whose prudence and capability impressed Maria Celeste.

In early January of 1631, the Magistracy, sensing a decline in the epidemic's virulence, hoped to hasten it to its end by a general quarantine of forty days' duration, which limited travel into or out of the city even more strictly than before and also forbade ordinary household visits among neighbors and friends. The only permissible reasons for one to venture outdoors now were to go to church or to buy food or medicines. Still, Maria Celeste continued to see to her father's needs:

> I am returning the bleached collars, which, on account of their being so frayed, refused to turn out as exquisitely as I would have wished: if you need anything else please remember that nothing in the world brings me greater joy than serving you, just as you for your part seem to devote yourself to doting on me and satisfying any request, since you provide for my every need with such solicitude.

If her cloistering posed no impediment to their emotional closeness, the distance between Arcetri and Galileo's home, on the Florentine hill called Bellosguardo, now raised a formidable barrier. "I find my thoughts stay fixed on you day and night," Maria Celeste wrote, "and many times I regret the great remove that bars me from being able to hear daily news of you, as I would so desire."

Galileo suffered the same longing. The prospect of a forty-five-minute mule trek from his house to her convent, though it hadn't seemed so lengthy or arduous at first, too often held him back of late. He decided to move to Arcetri.

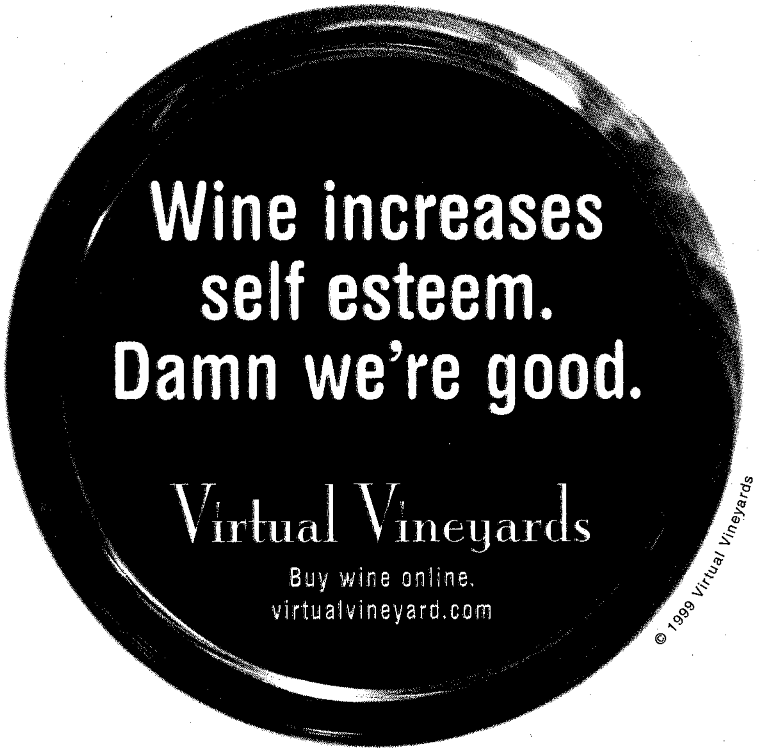
With her characteristic ingenuity and energy, Maria Celeste canvassed the local real-estate market from inside the walls of San Matteo. She discovered only a few available properties, however, because wealthy city dwellers cherished their villas in Arcetri as weekend escapes to the country, and because the working farms in the region were passed down through families, as they had been for generations. Moreover, some lands were deeded to the Church under a variety of legal situations, which meant that the question of their ownership generated considerable dispute.

Nevertheless, Maria Celeste presently learned of the availability of a villa belonging to one Signor Esaù Martellini, which occupied such an exquisite site atop the western slope of Arcetri that it had been dubbed Il Gioiello—the jewel. Built in the thirteen-hundreds by gentry who were establishing a farm near the convent, it had narrowly escaped destruction during the Siege of Florence two centuries later, when the Medici returned to power by force after one of their periodic banishments from the city. Il Gioiello had stood in ruins for several years after the siege. Then it had been refurbished and rebuilt, with thick stone walls that met at the corners of rooms in graceful arches called lunettes; with floors of brick laid out in herringbone patterns; with intricate wooden ceilings; and with wide windows that were shuttered, barred, and set so low they seemed to kneel into the street.

What Galileo loved best about the place were the sunny garden to the south of the house, reliably watered by the *tramontana,* and the semi-enclosed loggia facing the courtyard near the well, where his potted fruit trees might pass the colder months in safety. Maria Celeste anticipated his arrival:

> We lament the time away from you, Sire, covetous of the pleasure we would have drawn from this day, had we found ourselves all together in each other's company. But, if it please God, I expect that this will soon come to pass, and in the meanwhile I enjoy the hope of having you here always near us.

Galileo signed a contract with Signor Martellini on September 22, 1631, which set the rent for Il Gioiello at thirty-five scudi per year—a fraction of the hundred he had paid at Bellosguardo—due in two equal installments, every May and November. Approach-



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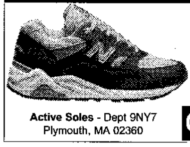

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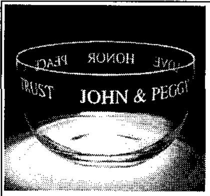

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"Is this the year, Pumpkin? Goodbye, love boat, hello, elder hostel?"

• •

ing his seventieth year, he expected to live out the remainder of his days in these idyllic surroundings. From the window of the room Galileo chose for his study, he could see the Convent of San Matteo, just a stone's throw away, downhill to the left of the vineyard.

BETWEEN August of 1630, when the plague broke out in Florence, and the autumn of 1631, when Galileo settled in Arcetri, he gradually and with great difficulty overcame the impasse that had stalled the publication of his "Dialogue" for another year. "In the meantime, the work stays in a corner," Galileo had observed with bitterness, "and my life wastes away as I continue living in constant ill health."

Frustrated, Galileo had appealed to the Grand Duke for help, "so that while I am still alive I may know the outcome of my long and hard work." Much of the delay involved the censors' insistence on approving a delicate preface and conclusion for the book, stressing the hypothetical nature of Galileo's treatment of the banned Copernican argument.

"In accordance with the order of His Holiness about Signor Galilei's book," the Father Master of the Sacred Palace in Rome finally wrote to the Florentine Inquisitor, "I send you this beginning or preface to be placed on the first page; the author is free to change or embellish its verbal expressions as long as he keeps the substance of the content." Rather than dictate the precise wording of the ending, after all that had happened, the Father Master simply tacked on a coda to his text for the preface. "At the end," these instructions stated, "one must have a peroration of the work in accordance with this preface. Signor Galilei must add the reasons pertaining to divine omnipotence which His Holiness gave him; these must quiet the intellect, even if there is no way out of the Pythagorean arguments."

The Father Master knew just how compellingly Galileo had presented the "Pythagorean arguments," as he called the Copernican world view. Indeed, by the time readers turned the last page of the "Dialogue" they might well believe that Pythagoras and Copernicus had trounced Aristotle and Ptolemy for good. But, of course, Galileo was not allowed to leave the matter hanging there, as though admitting the absolute truth of the Copernican opinion. Short of divine revelation, only hypothetical truth would serve.

In June, 1631, with permission finally granted, the exhaustive process of printing a thousand copies of the five-hundred-page "Dialogue" began, and wore on for nine months until the book's completion, in February, 1632. No written words of encouragement from Maria Celeste sped Galileo through this last leg of publication: father and daughter now lived in such proximity that they found no reason to write. He could walk from his front door to her parlor grille in minutes, and if he was too busy or too troubled by his pains he could send his housekeeper with news. After Maria Celeste addressed her letter of August 30, 1631, to Galileo at Bellosguardo, she may have imagined that she need never write to her father again. But his move did not end their correspondence. It merely introduced a pause that lasted almost a year and a half—until early in 1633, when the shock wave initiated by the publication of the "Dialogue" shattered Galileo's peace in Arcetri.

AT first, everything augured well for the book, which met with immediate and immense success. Galileo presented the first bound copy to the Grand Duke at the Pitti Palace on February 22, 1632. In Florence, the book sold out as quickly as it entered the shops. Galileo also sent copies to friends in other cities, such as Bologna, where a fellow-mathematician compared the "Dialogue" to the great Italian epic poem "Orlando Furioso" (Galileo's favorite), saying, "Wherever I begin, I can't put it down."

The copies destined for Rome, however, were held up until May on account of Roman quarantine regulations requiring all shipments of books imported from plague regions to be dismantled and fumigated. Galileo got around this obstacle by sending several presentation copies into the Holy City in the luggage of a travelling friend, who distributed them among various luminaries.

Some Jesuit astronomers who read the "Dialogue" reacted violently to it, especially those who had traded barbs with Galileo in earlier disputes—about sunspots, for example, and comets. Soon the "Dialogue" provoked Pope Urban's ire as well. It came to his attention at a most inopportune moment, when his profligate spending on war efforts was well on its way to doubling the papal debt, and when his fears of Spanish intrigue against him had reached new heights of paranoia.

Though Pope Urban did not read Galileo's book, anonymous advisers judged it for him as an egregious insult. Galileo's enemies in Rome saw the "Dialogue" as a scandalous glorification of Copernicus. And the Pope, who had already been loudly accused of flagging Catholic zeal on the battlefronts of Europe, could not allow a new affront to go unpunished. Before the end of September, an official order reached the Inquisitor in Florence, announcing that the "Dialogue" could no longer be sold (though it was already sold out) and demanding that the author appear before the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

Galileo applied to the Vatican for leniency. Would Urban VIII please excuse the aged, unwell Galileo from travelling to Rome—especially now that the plague was recurring in Florence? And, given the fact that the "Dialogue" had gone through proper channels to receive official approval from all the relevant authorities, couldn't Galileo respond in writing to any objection now raised against it? No. And no. The most the Pontiff would concede was that Galileo might travel to Rome in comfort and at his own pace. The journey, begun in late January, 1633, took two weeks, and then Galileo spent an additional two weeks detained near Acquapendente, in quarantine, in uncomfortable quarters with nothing to eat but bread and eggs with wine. His daughter wrote:

> Seeing that still no letters have come giving us definite news of your arrival in Rome (and you can imagine, Sire, with what eagerness I in particular anticipate those letters), I return to write to you again, so that you may know how anxiously I live, while awaiting word from you.

Most of February passed with Galileo detained at the Tuscan Embassy in Rome but without being called to appear before the Inquisitors. As a result, Maria Celeste let herself believe that the looming ordeal might be reduced to a tranquil interlude that would ultimately redound to Galileo's greater recognition and renown. She wrote on March 5th:

> I take comfort, and ever again I thank blessed God, hearing that your affairs thus far proceed with such tranquility and silence, which bodes well for a happy and prosperous outcome, as I have always hoped would come with divine help and by the intercession of the most holy Blessed Virgin.

So far, nothing had happened to Galileo in Rome save for his birthday's passing uneventfully on the fifteenth of February. Now he was sixty-nine, although the references to him throughout the trial, including his personal declarations, stated his age as seventy.

Maria Celeste continued to write at least one long report every Saturday, in which she attempted "to fit all the things I would chatter to you about over a week's time." To allay the pain of her father's absence, she kept herself busier than ever—or, in her words, she performed "the office of Martha," the patron saint of cooks and housekeepers, "all day long . . . without a single intermission." On April 12, 1633, after Galileo had waited two months at the Tuscan Embassy, the Commissary General of the Holy Office of the Inquisition finally brought him in for questioning. To her "Most Beloved Lord Father," Maria Celeste wrote that she had learned

> of the conditions imposed on you on account of your affair, Sire, that alas you are detained in the chambers of the Holy Office; on the one hand this gives me great distress, convinced as I am that you find yourself with scant peace of mind, and perhaps also deprived of all bodily comforts. . . . Dearest lord father, I wanted to write to you now, to tell you I partake in your torments, so as to make them lighter for you to bear: I have given no hint of these difficulties to anyone else, wanting to keep the unpleasant news to myself, and to speak to the others only of your pleasures and satisfactions. Thus we are all awaiting your return, eager to enjoy your conversation again with delight.

An anxious daughter wrote these words in a very controlled hand, much smaller than her usual script, as if to shrink from the knowledge that the ordeal of her father's trial had only just begun. Before the year was out, the strength of their mutual affection would submit to tests neither of them could yet imagine, including Galileo's forced confession, his condemnation to perpetual house arrest, and the banning of the "Dialogue," which remained on the Index of Prohibited Books for two hundred years. ♦

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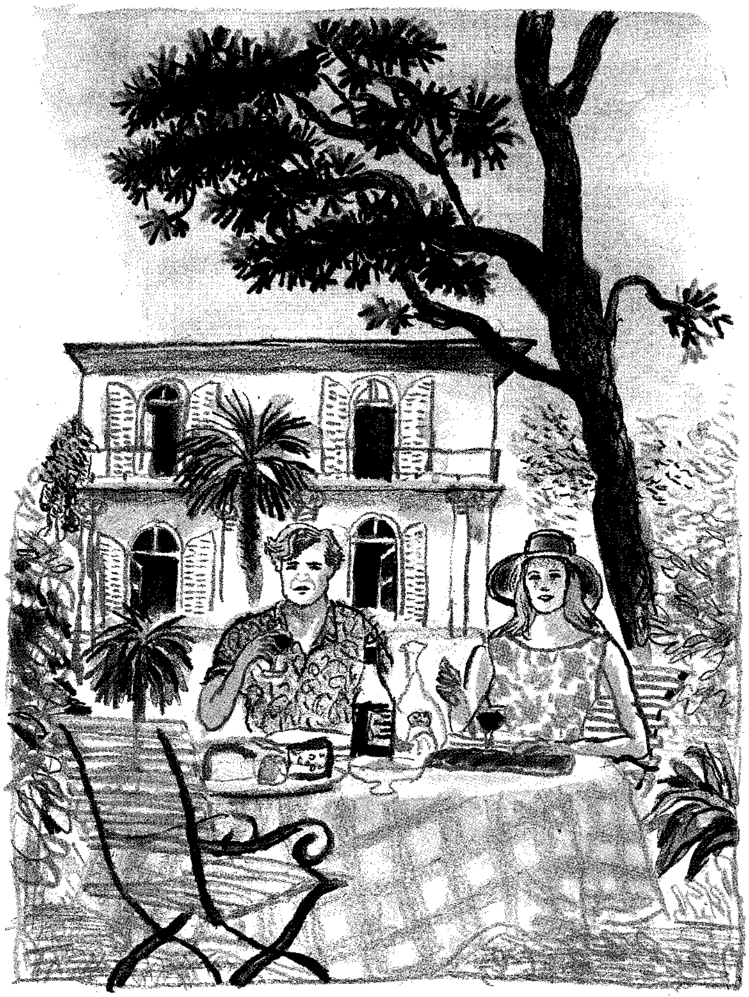
PERSONAL HISTORY

KITCHEN WARS

Is transatlantic travel any way to save a marriage?

BY BETTY FUSSELL

TAKING a trip has always been one way to stop marital rumblings dead in their tracks—or, at least, to postpone the inevitable to a time when you imagine you'll feel more like coping. My husband, Paul, and I discovered this remedy early in our marriage. From our first trip, in steerage, to our last, in first class, twenty years later, a union that tended to founder in home ports recovered its ballast at sea. Life on board was stripped to the basics—food, booze, sex, books, sea, air, sun. The class-stacked decks, the regimented schedule, the assigned places at dinner all had the satisfactions of limited choice—imposed by others. Luckily, our need to be at sea coincided with the postwar golden age of the transatlantic liner, when ships were icons of national glory (the Liberté, the France, the United States, the Queen Elizabeth, the Leonardo) in an elaborate costume party that allowed you to choose country, class, and cuisine. The French provided the best food in all classes and were the most egalitarian about loopholes and gangways for interclass minglings. So, whenever possible, we went French.



The author and her former husband, Paul, in Cimiez: A dreamscape where the baguette was always crisp and the butter ever sweet.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GERARD NICOLAS

On our first trip, in the churning bowels of the Liberté, in 1953, we were wedged like a sandwich in our bunks, in a stateroom so narrow that you had to turn sidewise to get to the head. But the boom of the propellers that rocked us to sleep at night was as soothing as the wake that streamed forever behind us, annihilating time, space, and chronic antagonisms for six blissful days of being nobody, going nowhere, doing nothing. I stayed up all night to get a dawn glimpse of England's sceptered isle, but my heart was captured by the noonday sun of southern France, with dappled plane trees in orderly rows, smelling of wild rosemary and thyme. To Paul and me, both of us Californians, England was Puritan America intensified by caste warfare, but France—or Provence, anyway—was California with a sense of history, and a history of the senses as well. And so, over the years, we'd dip into England for literary duty, then run over to France for food and fun.

TO be sure, our differences resurfaced even when we were abroad. I'd married a scholar—a pigeonholer who delighted in the critique: each product, each meal, each chef, and each restaurant was ranked according to the categories of excellence established by the red Michelin guide, which was our vade-mecum compass and Bible. My pleasure was in the hunt: in tracking each comestible to its farmer, fisherman, baker, vintner, goatherd, poultry breeder, truffle hunter, butcher, oysterman, cheese maker. It thrilled me to uncover, layer by layer, the world they shared.

Paul and I were united, however, in our quest for the Perfect Chicken, which we first ate at the three-star restaurant of La Mère Brazier, near Lyons. We had sought out the eponymous proprietress of this establishment because I had read in Elizabeth David's "French Provincial Cooking" about Brazier's *volaille demi-deuil*—a pure-white chicken with slices of black truffle showing under the skin of the breast to create a "chicken in half-mourning." Brazier had inherited from one Mère Fillioux the dish and the skill of presenting it by using a four-inch kitchen knife. Fillioux, with her four-inch knife, had carved half a million chickens at the tables of her customers during a thirty-year reign as the doyenne of "*la cuisine de la mère*," and Mère Brazier had subsequently done the same. I asked where she got her chickens, the famed *poulardes de Bresse*, and she gave me a farmer's name but complained that they weren't the same as before. The notes that I took upon first sampling her chicken, which was served simply in a bouillon with poached carrots, pickles, and coarse salt, pointed up the differences between Paul and me. Paul, who taught English at Rutgers, was looking for the drama that he had experienced as a young soldier in Europe during the war. I was looking, like a pacifist, for purity.

Paul: Disappointing, because not exciting, not dramatic.

Betty: Lovely, because pure, like a perfect pot-au-feu, which couldn't be served in anything less than a three-star restaurant, because it's so simple.

Paul: One goes to a three-star as one goes to a whorehouse, for a bit of excitement. There's little enough drama in life. At a great restaurant, one shouldn't waste the opportunity to exploit brilliance, drama, theatricality.

That was a warning, but I didn't want to be warned.

If France was about food, England was about drink. Revise that: England was about getting drunk, in highly codified ways, in order to navigate the passageways connecting below stairs and above stairs. Everything below the neck, for starters, was below stairs—an area of embarrassment and shame, to be kept out of sight, like a basement loo. Everything that mattered was above stairs, where wit and malice glittered like ice cubes, especially when stimulated by strong drink. These categories clinched Paul's Anglophilia. Like some nationalist transsexual, he felt that he'd been born an Englishman in an American's body. I felt American to the marrow of my inherited Bible Belt bones.

We tried London for a year in the early sixties, renting a Regency town house from a pseudo Polish countess (real Polish, pseudo countess) on Trevor Square, in Knightsbridge—a classy address, where our local grocery store was Harrods. The house was a period classic of stacked decks, one room per floor: dining room on the first, parlor on the second, master bedroom on the third, second bedroom on the fourth—and kitchen in the dark, dank, below-the-waterline basement.

The contrast between above stairs and below stairs was as great as Paul could wish. The subterranean kitchen was built for dwarfs and equipped for nothing more strenuous than boiling water for tea. It had an electric teakettle, a brown china pot, a quilted-cloth tea cozy, and two kinds of sieve—a fine-meshed strainer with a silver rim for formal service, at the parlor tea table, and a hinged pair of perforated metal spoons to enclose loose tea leaves in a single cup. Tea

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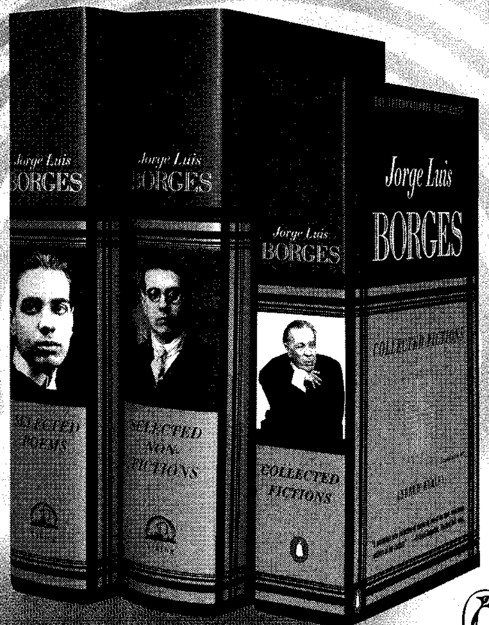

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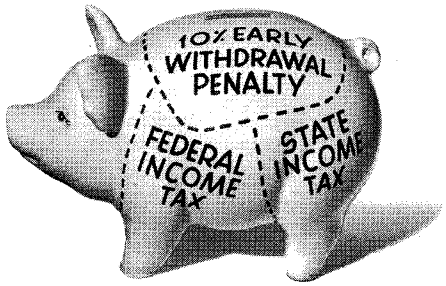

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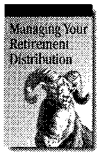

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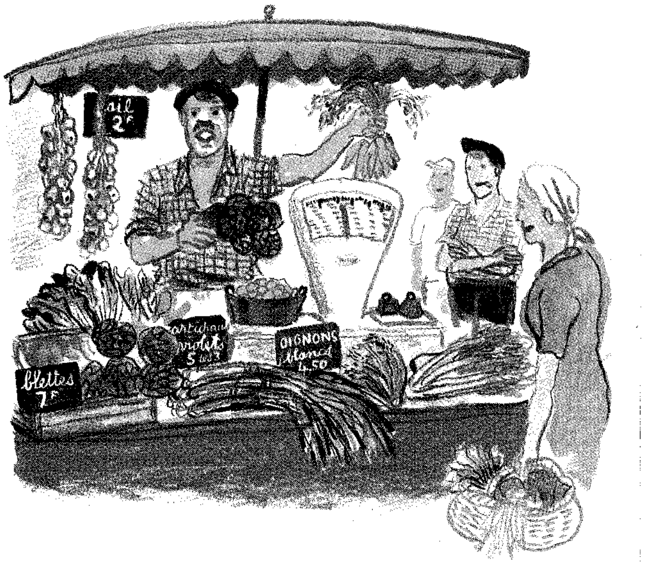
bags had not yet displaced the rituals of that seemly alternative to booze—a proper cup of tea.

A narrow staircase not quite as wide as my hips connected the kitchen, below, to the dining room, above. So did a dumbwaiter. A buzzer concealed beneath a rug at the head of the dining-room table summoned the putative dwarfs to haul and serve. In the dining room was a chinoiserie highboy lacquered in a red of the same shade as the walls, on which a skilled Italian had painted murals of Venice, à la Canaletto. He had also painted Venetian scenes on the table itself, and on the dining chairs. In such a setting, food was superfluous, even counterproductive.



Although our countess thought that we were American scum, loaded with money, a few English literary folk decided that we were socially acceptable. We were acceptable because, as Americans, we were hors de combat in the great game of Class.

We had known Kingsley Amis and his first wife, Hilary Bardwell, when he taught for a year at Princeton, where we had many friends. Kingsley had cut a swath a mile wide through the faculty wives, literally laying them low with his charm, his celebrity, his curly hair, and his bad-boy antics. Kingsley had propositioned me once in the bathroom of our house while I was washing out a baby's diaper. "Not quite my idea of a romantic setting," I'd said. "Oh," he'd said, as if surprised. "Would you prefer a bed?"

Over the years, Paul and I had become chums of Kingsley and his second wife, the writer Elizabeth Jane Howard. Both of them were adept at using travel to mitigate marital irritations, even though the tactic hadn't managed to save Kingsley's first marriage or Jane's second. We'd had good times with the Amises in Greece, where Kingsley had got through the terrors of foreign food with the comforts of drink—ouzo and retsina and even tooth-rotting Mavrodaphne.

Once Paul and I were installed in London, we became semi-permanent house guests at Lemmons, the expansive Georgian house outside London, which Jane, single-handed, had restored to something of its former splendor. In marrying her, Kingsley had unquestionably married up. Yet, while she had persuaded him to have his shirts custom-made to complete his transformation from Angry Young Man to Colonel Blimp, she could not alter his mind about food.

At Lemmons, Jane cooked and Kingsley drank. House guests, like us, served as spectators and buffers in kitchen wars that made our own seem placid. It didn't matter whether Jane served a *blanquette de veau* from Escoffier or a steak-and-kidney pie from Mrs. Beeton—Jane was that rare thing in an Englishwoman of her class, an excellent cook—Kingsley's bottle of HP Sauce was always by his side and was used at full tilt.

To Kingsley, food was the punishment and drink the reward for his having been born with an above-stairs mind in a below-stairs body. Food had to be doused with chutney, lime mango, and flaming-hot sauces of every kind to disguise the obscenity of his having to eat at all. In his novel "The Green Man," he wrote (as Allington, the innkeeper), "Chewing away at the vile texture of meat, pulling bones out of tasteless mouthfuls of fish or encompassing the sheer nullity of vegetables is not my idea of a treat." What Kingsley thought a treat was whitebait, crisply fried with extra salt and copious lemons. He polished off platters of the fish in quantities that provoked a satisfying belch designed to startle nearby diners and irritate Jane.

Booze was another matter. Not the booze itself but the ritual of booze: anticipation was prolonged by opening the drinks cupboard, fetching ice cubes from the fridge, placing them one by one in the proper glasses, measuring out the double shots, and squirting the siphon at precisely the right angle.

Finally, it came time to repay the Amises' generosity with a dinner party at Trevor Square. We had a woman working for us named Phoebe, who was from South Africa—and was small enough to inhabit the kitchen—but she was a housecleaner, and not a cook. With typical American bravado, I blundered ahead and attempted a classic English menu. I bought canned turtle soup of high quality from Harrods and spiked it with sherry. From Cobb, the best butcher in Knightsbridge, I bought a saddle of lamb, kidneys attached, to be served with scalloped potatoes and fresh peas, followed by an English trifle for dessert. The beginning and the end seemed simple enough. It was the middle that would require real cooking in the underground cavern—in an oven that, I discovered too late, never got above two hundred degrees Fahrenheit. The results? The potatoes were glue, the peas were bullets, and the lamb was half raw and half scorched, from my attempt to fry it on the top of the stove.

We were eight at table, dressed in formal suits and long gowns. Ignoring the buzzer at my feet, I would run downstairs, throw food in the dumbwaiter, work the pulley, dash back upstairs, tripping over my skirt, and serve the food. To carve the lamb, I had only a stubby knife with a dull blade. As I was whacking away at the backbone, the entire roast slid off the platter and onto my neighbor's lap. With impeccable English courtesy, he asked if he might help me carve.

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FOR more than a decade, Paul and I shuttled between England and France, but as our discords grew larger we increasingly went to France, for beach time at Collioure or Bandol. In the late sixties, we decided to live, with our two children, for a year in Cimiez, a residential district above Nice where Queen Victoria had come to visit and Matisse to live. Nice was now a big city—part Old Town and part New Town; part Italian, part Provençal, and part English—clustered around eighteenth-century arcades of deep burgundy and baroque Edwardian hotels fronting the long promenade along the Baie des Anges. It was the right place for Anglo-Francophiles on the run.

We'd rented a house with the lovely name of Villa les Marguerites, which stood in the middle of a walled garden on the Chemin des Pins. Our landlady and her husband lived in an ordinary house directly below us on the steep hillside, and, despite their obvious contempt for American money, they'd allowed us their villa on the condition that we pay the whole year's rent in advance, in cash. We called them *les fascistes*, because they attributed all their ills to the death of Marshal Pétain. Monsieur was openly hostile and was also paranoid, as we discovered when he sneaked into the villa one day while we were away and accidentally broke off his key in the front-door lock. Later, he charged us for the pane of glass he'd broken to open the door.

It was Madame who hired our first cook. She found it unthinkable that anyone could live in a villa with such splendid rooms—walls of turquoise brocaded silk, gilded furniture dating from Louis XVI, rugs of Oriental weave, toilet seats of Delft porcelain—and not have a servant to do the cooking and cleaning. She was protecting her investment, and, besides, it would take a native servant to know how to cook in what was no more than a narrow corridor of a kitchen, with no equipment, in a house heated by an ancient coal furnace in the basement. Madame La Fou, as we ungrammatically called our new employee, presented herself as a cook from the north—exact location unspecified—who had presided for twenty years over the grand table of a Monseigneur. The landlady accepted her on the spot.

Madame La Fou had no place to live

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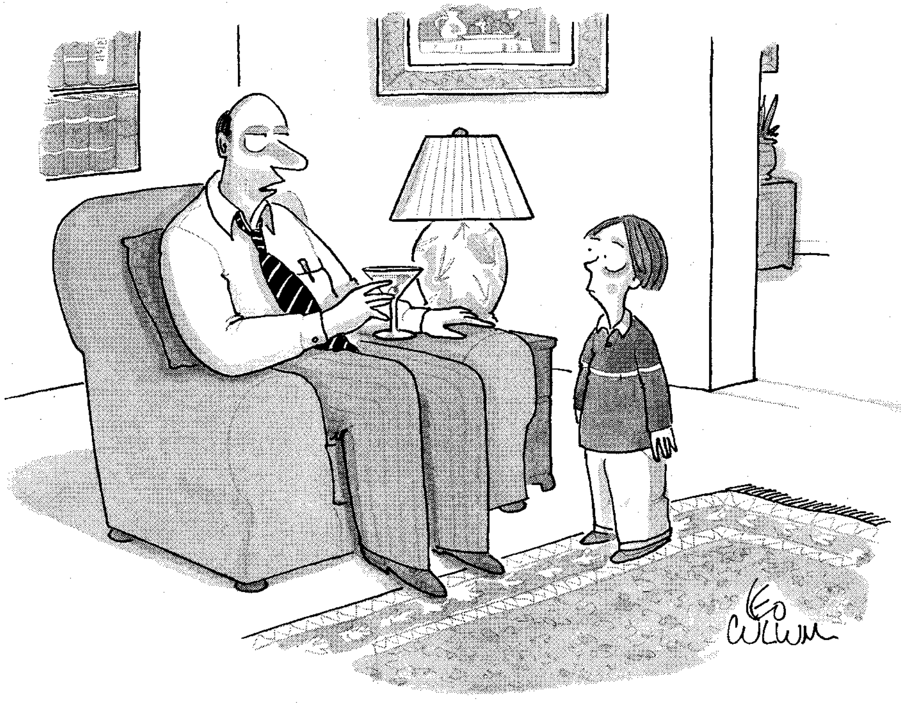


"Not now, Matthew. This is Daddy's quiet-desperation time."

• •

and demanded that we set up a cot for her in the basement. Paul hated the idea of having a stranger around, but there was no alternative. Next, she demanded that we buy her a *batterie de cuisine*, whose items she spelled out on several sheets of paper, in a meticulous hand.

I went to the landlady with concern, because the list was so long and I didn't know what most of the things were. I could look up *tamis de crin* in a dictionary and find out that it was a sieve of horsehair, but what did *that* mean? And were all these esoteric instruments really necessary? To my surprise, Madame the landlady not only said "*Oui*" but agreed to pay for them. It wasn't that she had suffered a sudden fit of generosity; rather, she had a Frenchwoman's overriding sense of the *dignité propre à la cuisine.* The kitchen itself had no dignity at all; it was a squalid greenroom for the furious comedy performed at the dining table by Madame La Fou each noon.

For two or three hours, while the rest of Nice and Cimiez retired to their houses to eat and then nap, we sweated to keep up with the onslaught of dishes served course after course by Madame La Fou. Properly equipped, she could make a silken pâté out of any sow's ear, tail, or hoof. She worked herself into a lather with her *tamis*, her *braisière*, *bain-marie*, and *moule à douille.* Her cheeks fiery, her hair in a tight bun, she mumbled and sighed as she presented each dish, then hovered over us as we took the first bite of an angelic *coquilles Saint Jacques au vin blanc* or a green *potage à l'oseille*. She was waiting for the praise that we lavished upon her in vain. She knew that her food was incomparable and that we were unworthy of it. We were not French—and, especially, not French from the north. Her contempt for the French of Provence was as intense as the landlady's for the Americans of Nouvelle Jersey.

One day, Madame La Fou began to grumble about her basement quarters. She had originally maintained that all she wanted was a cot, but now she wanted to move into the guest room, upstairs. She also began to exhibit signs of paranoia like our landlord's. "They" were after her, she explained, sweat beading her upper lip. We knew that she had left behind a husband and children as well as the Monseigneur, but she had steadfastly declined to say why, except to imply that something terrible had happened. Poison, I speculated, having just read Mauriac's "Thérèse Desqueyroux." After a particularly sullen lunch, I consulted the landlady. "*Parbleu*, I fired her this morning," she said, in a rush. "She came to me with the most extraordinary demands! The woman's demented—I wouldn't be at all surprised if she was wanted by the police—so I gave her twenty-four hours to pack and get out."

I told the children to lock their bedroom door in case Madame La Fou tried to sleep upstairs on this, her last night, and enter their room by mistake. We locked our door and that of the guest room, but there was nothing to be done about the adjoining balcony, which she could reach by climbing the wisteria that arbored the terrace. However, she had considerable poundage to haul, so we felt relatively safe. We heard nothing during the night, and the next morning she was gone, without a sound, leaving behind only a dignified *batterie de cuisine* and a faint sulfurous whiff of madness.

We hired the next cook ourselves, after making sure that she didn't want to live in. This cook, Madou, had been working since she was twelve in the hotels and restaurants of her native Médoc. She was in her forties and stood no higher than my waist, but she could do anything—stoke a furnace, fix a faucet, light the oven without causing an explosion, sing lullabies to the children, and make a *soupe de poissons* equal to any in Marseilles. And she liked Americans. They were nicer to her than the French, she said.

She insisted that I check all grocery accounts, item by item, and once she understood that I trusted her entirely she allowed me to accompany her on her shopping rounds. Wearing a little green coat, she buzzed like a fly through the produce of one corner market after another—the *poissonnerie*, *boucherie*, *boulangerie*, *charcuterie*, and *pâtisserie*—to poke, sniff, and negotiate before moving on. Each purchase was part of a litany intoned at breakneck speed, because it was as fixed as curtain time, five days a week. "*Bonjour, Mesdames*," sang the mussel seller and her husband, holding up a string bag of silvery black shells that had been freshly washed in a mussel-cleaning machine. "*Bonjour, Madame. Bonjour, Monsieur*," sang Madou in response. "*Comment ça va? Tout va bien? Ils sont tous frais? À quel prix ce matin? Ah, quelle horreur!*" The flutter of fingers over the shells, the quick counting of coins and bills, the ceremonial departure. "*Au revoir, Mesdames, merci bien.*" "*Au revoir, Madame. Au revoir, Monsieur. À bientôt.*" And then on to the carrot lady, the lettuce man, the cheese-and-milk couple, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker.

Once back in the villa, we deposited our string bags in the kitchen. Then I was banished to the parlor, because I got in the way as Madou whirled around the narrow space like the blade of a Cuisinart, turning all this raw material into the day's salads, sauces, soups, roasts, filets, omelettes, side dishes, and desserts—in a dreamscape where the baguette was always crisp and the butter ever sweet. Unless it rained—and it seldom did—we ate on the terrace, under the wisteria. After lunch, we staggered upstairs for the siesta, that most luxurious and un-American of rituals. We closed the tall wooden shutters over the French windows, but there was still some light in the room, and plenty of time to read and lazily make love, and even sleep.

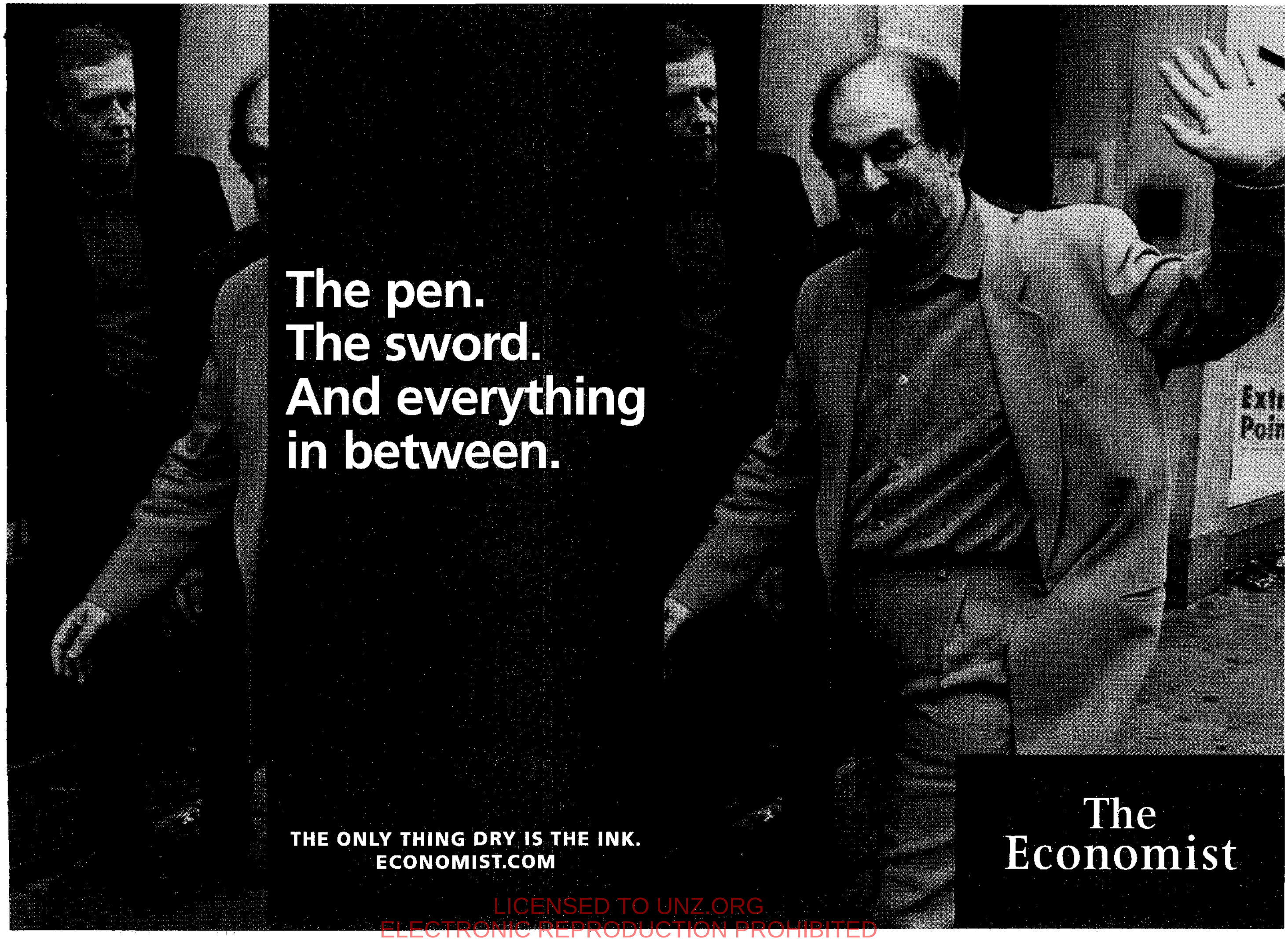
Nothing in Nice or Cimiez reopened until four in the afternoon. Then we woke to the drone of motor scooters swarming through the narrow streets. Madou had gone, leaving the kitchen and the rest of the house immaculate. She had set the dining table for tea and had put out bread and soup in the kitchen for supper. The soup was invariably a purée of leftover vegetables and meat juices, put through the *tamis* and enriched with a large pat of butter. The soup was as soothing as our daily routine, which, because it was almost as regimented as life aboard ship, seemed to stretch time instead of frazzling it. It was not real life, but it was a good way to live.

It was Madou who saved me during a *crise de foie*. "*Ma foi, mon foie*," we used to joke, because Madou ascribed every ailment, from a sick headache to an aching back, to the liver. But it was true that *ma foi*, in the medieval Christian sense of fidelity, was in poor shape. I was corresponding, fitfully and guiltily, with a man who had been my lover for several years. Adultery, like travel, had seemed a plausible stopgap to keep marriage bonds from breaking. I received my friend's letters at the Hôtel Vendôme, on Rue Pastorelli, my heart pounding, certain that the desk clerk knew I was having an affair—he was French, after all—and my conscience vowing that each letter would be my last. Therefore, when I was knocked out by shellfish poisoning, a bad liver seemed an appropriate punishment for bad faith.

The culprit was crayfish—a *langouste niçoise*, in our favorite of all restaurants, Chez Puget. Here everything about the setting and the presentation of the food was liturgic—the burgundy draperies on the windows, the mauve walls, the pink linen on the tables, the black silk bosom of Mme. Puget, at the cashier's counter, the white toque of M. Puget, in the kitchen. Here we studied the alphabet *sacré* of *aïoli*, *brandade*, and *cassoulet*, and learned that vegetables were always served on separate little dishes and that the secret of what we called "the caramel sauce" was foie gras stirred into a *glace de viande*.

Near the end of our stay, M. Puget promised to create a menu specially for us, culminating in a glorious *langouste*, served in its shell, the flesh wet with oil and garlic, cognac and tomato. We fell all over ourselves, in a dignified French way, of course, expressing gratitude to Monsieur and Madame, their children, and the descending row of kitchen help. By the time we reached our car, my belly was churning.

"Drive fast," I urged Paul. When we reached the villa, I stepped from the car and exploded in both directions. Paul


The pen.
The sword.
And everything
in between.
THE ONLY THING DRY IS THE INK.
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had to carry me into the house and into the john. I stayed there until all my insides were out, and then I fainted. I woke up in bed, and I stayed there for a week, with Madou hovering over me now with a cup of bouillon, now with a cup of tea, and, whenever I opened my mouth, with another teaspoon of Fernet Branca. She was doctor and nurse, and although I had no idea what a *crise de foie* was, I recognized a severe but not fatal case of libidinal purgation.

WORDS FROM THE SARCOPHAGUS

"Even when I danced erect
by the Nile's garden
I constructed Necropolis.

Ten million fellaheen cells
of my body floated stones
to establish a white museum."

Grisly, foul, and terrific
is the speech of bones,
thighs and arms slackened

into desiccated sacs of flesh
hanging from an armature
where muscle was, and fat.

"I lie on the painted bed
diminishing, concentrated
on the journey I undertake

to repose without pain
in the palace of darkness."
Everyone dies of something.

—DONALD HALL

In the mid-seventies, travel by sea had become as rare as divorce was common, but as our quarrels boiled up at home Paul and I decided to have one last fling on a transatlantic liner, and this time to do it in style—first class on the S.S. France. The first night's dinner, for which we had dressed with care and paraded down the staircase of the dining room with movie-star panache, was a disaster. A miserable fruit cocktail, a dried-out turbot, a shrivelled slice of turkey ballottine, a fatigued cheese served with Saltines. Saltines! Paul took it as a personal affront. I remonstrated with the maître d'hôtel that the meal was execrable. "*Comment?*" he inquired, puzzled. I repeated the word. "*Ah, exécrable,*" he repeated, with the accent on the penultimate syllable, laughing and nodding in agreement. "*Mais oui, mais oui, Madame—exécrable.*"

We gave up on the sea voyage as marital stratagem after a cruise from Southampton to Nice, to which we had been invited by Kingsley and Jane, who had been invited in turn by the novelist Anthony Powell and his wife, Lady Violet. I figured afterward that the Powells had wanted the Amises along as security against intruders, and that the Amises had wanted us there to distract them from their own disintegrating marriage, so, given the state of ours, we were happy to oblige. We were a set of nesting life preservers, but only the Powells were safe on our Journey to Disaster aboard the M.T.S. Orpheus, which was to make port stops along the western coast of Europe—Brittany, Spain, Portugal—until the ship reached its home port, Nice, from which it would take off on its regular Hellenic route along the eastern Mediterranean.

The trip began ominously. The Amises had misread the train schedule and had come within minutes of missing the boat. Then, while the Powells ascended to A (for Apollo) deck, above the water line, we and the Amises descended to D (for Dionysos) deck. We were back where Paul and I had started out on the Liberté, just above the vibrating propeller screws. But at least their mind-shattering noise muffled the shouting of the Amises in the cabin next to ours.

It was on this voyage that Kingsley, who later wrote up the trip for the London *Sunday Times*—"like an old wanker," as he put it—discovered an "inverse correlation between nations and their food-and-drink," which would spare him from ever having to go abroad again. "Spanish like English, nice people, nasty food; French, nasty people, nice food. . . .Greeks, nice people, *terrifying* food." Once, when I excused some outrage by remarking, "You must remember we're not in England now," Jane replied, "Oh, yes, we are. We're always in England."

The "welcome dinner" was a foretaste of what Powell might have called "the awfulness" to come: canned fruit cocktail, library-paste soup, drip-dried fish, greasy duck, unripe tomatoes, melted ice cream. The Powells, I noted, took fruit cup and soup and went straight to ice cream. The dining room, which was called the Lounge of the Muses, was a depressing rackety chamber of low ceilings and loud voices, in which the harried Greek waiters slapped down course after course of inedibles, followed by the hot-water drink labelled "coffee" and the warm-water drink labelled "tea." Wine was extra, of course, and the Powells' rule was that each couple were to order and pay for their own bottle. They themselves upheld the vow that they had sworn to each other at the outbreak of the Second World War, which was that, no matter how terrible things got, they would drink a good claret every night.

The Powells quickly established one corner of the lounge as their private gathering place for drinks before and after dinner. No matter how foul the food, you could always wash it away with brandy and laughter. In contrast to the turmoil belowdecks, the Powells offered a haven of marital civility. Whatever adjustments had been necessary in their own marriage, they had made them decades ago, and they now held hands serenely in the oven mitts of upper-class security.

I began to suspect that they had brought along their own stash of food and drink. For the rest of us, it was a scramble. Whenever we hit port, Tony sauntered, and Violet painted watercolors, while the rest of us ran for the nearest bar or market or sidewalk café to stock up on provender—it didn't matter what, whether a Breton cake, a baguette, a bottle of rum, Ricard, hard cider, or gin. Our fellow-voyagers were characters who might have been drawn by the satiric pen of a Powell or an Amis in a particularly vicious mood—the fat fish-lipped Vicar travelling with a doddering Church Lady; the middle-aged Spinster Son in a ravelled sweater, travelling with his roly-poly Mum, whose bottom he had to push up the bus steps with his hands; the Siren, who looked like a transvestite in a cowboy hat and a pointy bra; the Country Squire and Wife, whose son was affianced to a Connecticut divorcée who, they feared, would not know that she was "marrying into a family of the distinction of the Blofields of Blofield House." And then there was the aristocratic Lady Violet herself, with her whispery voice and pale paints and her Perfect Companion, Tony, constantly amused and amusing, with very large teeth and such exquisite manners that he would ask the ladies before eating an apple, "Do you mind if I bite?"

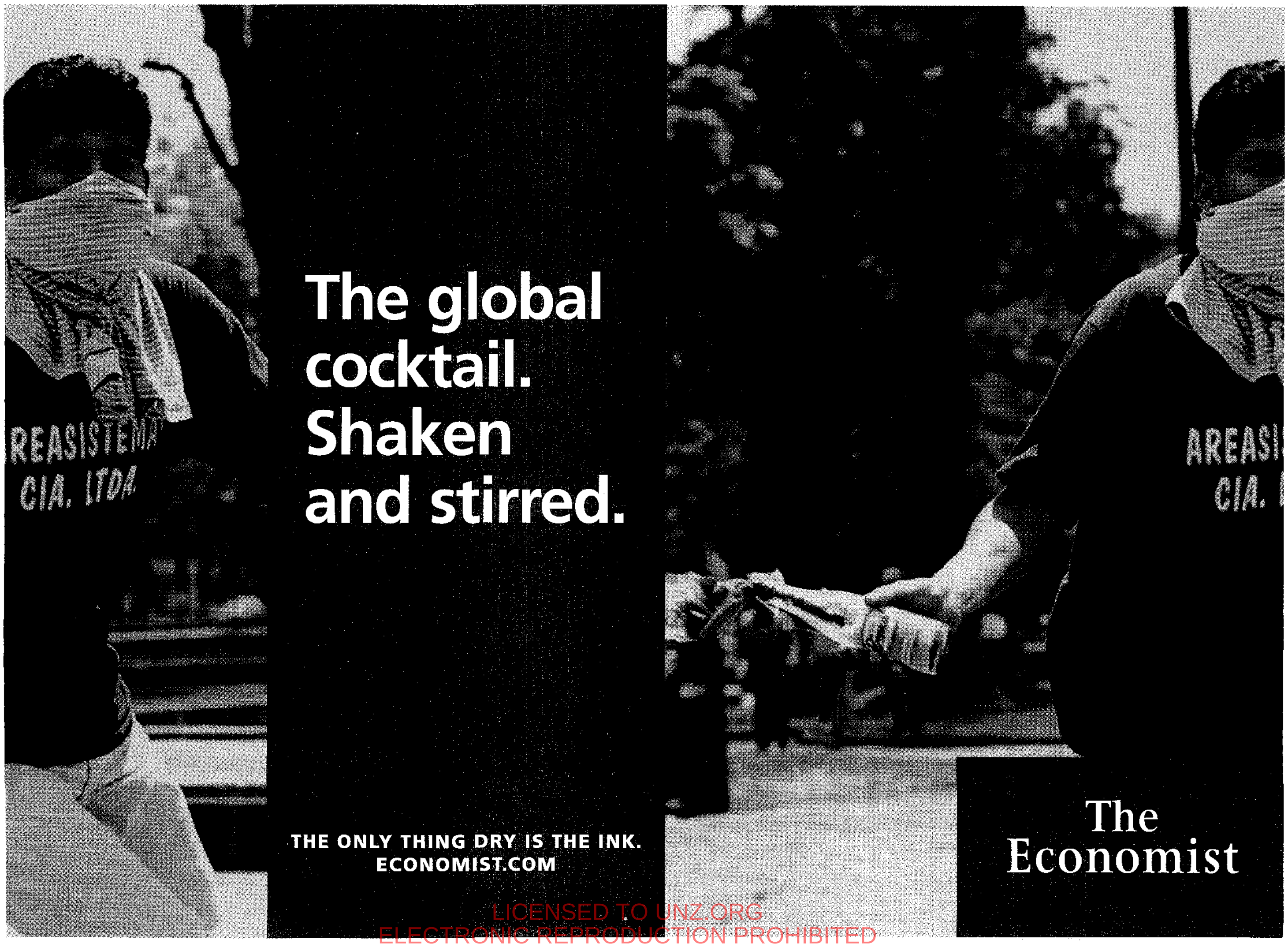
More and more, we looked forward to disembarking in the Old Port in Nice. As we slid past Collioure, Marseilles, Saint-Tropez, and Cannes, Jane remarked on how many happy memories she had of the Côte d'Azur. "You're lucky," Kingsley said. "I have no happy memories."

We were late in landing, and all the hotels were booked. Paul and I finally got a suite in the Albert Premier, which we couldn't afford. We ate a last lunch of omelettes and French fries and cheese and drank bottles of red wine at our favorite outdoor snack bar, Queenies.

In the afternoon, Paul and I took the long walk up to Chemin des Pins, looking for the Villa les Marguerites and its walled garden, but all the villas were long gone, having been replaced by massive high-rises with balconies, from one of which a pair of elderly women with dyed hair looked down at us with open hostility. Chez Puget, however, was still on the Rue Deloye, and Madame still rested her bosom on the cashier's podium. We reserved a table for dinner and walked along the Promenade des Anglais. The pebbled beach sported a number of topless girls sunning their breasts—another change. A row of elderly men watched silently from their deck chairs as a dark Niçois passionately kissed the breasts of a buxom blonde.

At Chez Puget that evening, the *soupe de poissons* was as excellent as before, topped with the same mustard-yellow *rouille*. The *poularde de Bresse à la crème* was served with the same caramel sauce of old, and the squared roast potatoes and needle-thin *haricots verts* still arrived on separate plates. We drank a costly Chablis, Grand Cru 1969. We lingered over our *cafés filtres* and noted that the Puget son and daughter were not in evidence. All the waiters were old men, and Mme. Puget did not recognize either our names or our faces.

That night, I found it impossible to sleep. Horns blared and sirens heehawed along the Baie des Anges. From the garden below the hotel, a rock concert was in full swing, and, once it ended, freaked-out speedsters began to howl. I was still awake at dawn, when a pale sun turned the sea a battleship gray and the moon, shaped like a croissant, faded behind an apron of dirty clouds. It was clear that more than the trip was over. ♦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PROFILE

A PRYOR LOVE

The life and times of America's comic prophet of race.

BY HILTON ALS

SKIN FLICK

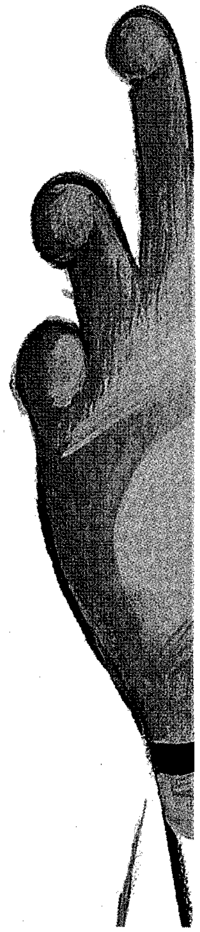
WINTER, 1973. Late afternoon: the entr'acte between dusk and darkness, when the people who conduct their business in the street—numbers runners in gray chesterfields, out-of-work barmaids playing the dozens, adolescents cultivating their cigarette jones and lust, small-time hustlers selling "authentic" gold wristwatches that are platinum bright—look for a place to roost and to drink in the day's sin. Young black guy, looks like the comedian Richard Pryor, walks into one of his hangouts, Opal's Silver Spoon Café. A greasy dive with an R. & B. jukebox, it could be in Detroit or in New York, could be anywhere. Opal's has a proprietor—Opal, a young and wise black woman, who looks like the comedian Lily Tomlin—and a little bell over the door that goes *tink-a-link*, announcing all the handouts and gimmes who come to sit at Opal's counter and talk about how needy their respective asses are.

Black guy sits at the counter, and Opal offers him some potato soup—"something nourishing," she says. Black guy has moist, on-the-verge-of-lying-or-crying eyes and a raggedy Afro. He wears a green fatigue jacket, the kind of jacket brothers brought home from 'Nam, which guys like this guy continue to wear long after they've returned home, too shell-shocked or stoned to care much about their haberdashery. Juke—that's the black guy's name—is Opal's baby, flopping about in all them narcotics he's trying to get off of by taking that methadone, which Juke and Opal pronounce "metha*don*"—the way two old-timey Southerners would, the way Juke and Opal's elders might have, if they knew what that shit was, or was for.

Juke and Opal express their feelings for each other, their shared view of the world, in a lyrical language, a colored people's language, which tries to atomize their anger and their depression. Sometimes their anger is wry: Opal is tired of hearing about Juke's efforts to get a job, and tells him so. "Hand me that jive about job training," she says. "You trained, all right. You highly skilled at not working." But that's not entirely true. Juke has submitted himself to the rigors of "rehabilitation." "I was down there for about three weeks, at that place, working," Juke says. "Had on a suit, tie. Shaving. Acting crazy. Looked just like a fool in the circus." Pause. "And I'm fed up with it." Pause. "Now I know how to do a job that don't know how to be done no more." Opal's face fills with sadness. Looking at her face can fill your mind with sadness. She says, "For real?" It's a rhetorical question that black people have always asked each other or themselves when they're handed more hopelessness: Is this for real?

Night is beginning to spread all over Juke and Opal's street; it is the color of a thousand secrets combined. The bell rings, and a delivery man comes in, carting pies. Juke decides that everyone should chill out—he'll play the jukebox, they'll all get down. Al Green singing "Let's Stay Together" makes the pie man and Juke do a little finger-snapping, a little jive. Opal hesitates, says, "Naw," but then dances anyway, and her shyness is just part of the fabric of the day, as uneventful as the delivery man leaving to finish up his rounds, or Opal and Juke standing alone in this little restaurant, a society unto themselves.

The doorbell's tiny peal. Two white people—a man and a woman, social workers—enter Opal's. Youngish, trenchcoated. And the minute the white people enter, something terrible happens, from an aesthetic point of view. They alienate everything. They



Pryor enlightened his audience on race

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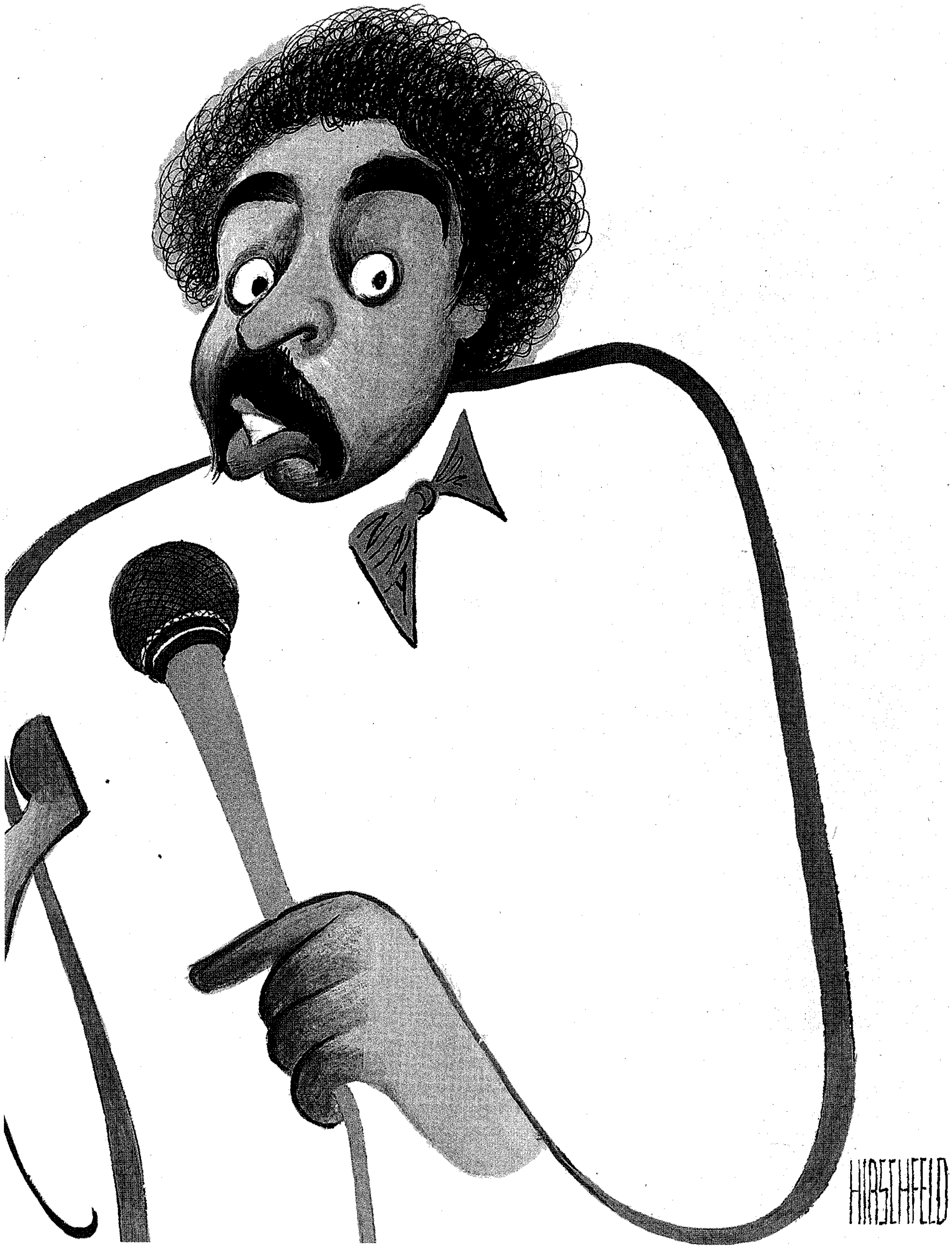


erracial relationships using a flamboyant vocabulary that he'd learned growing up in his grandmother's whorehouse.

fracture our suspended disbelief. They interrupt our identification with the protagonists of the TV show we've been watching, which becomes TV only when those social workers start hassling our Juke, our Opal, equal halves of the same resilient black body. When we see those white people, we start thinking about things like credits, and remember that this is a television play, after all, written by the brilliant Jane Wagner, and played with astonishing alacrity and compassion by Richard Pryor and Lily Tomlin on "Lily," Tomlin's second variety special, which aired on CBS in 1973, and which remains, a little over a quarter of a century later, the most profound meditation on race and class that I have ever seen on a major network.

"We're doing some community research and we'd like to ask you a few questions," the white woman social worker declares as soon as she enters Opal's. Juke and Opal are more than familiar with this line of inquiry, which presumes that people like them are always available for questioning—servants of the liberal cause. "I wonder if you can tell me, have you ever been addicted to drugs?" the woman asks Juke.

Pryor-as-Juke responds instantly. "Yeah, I been addicted," he says. "I'm addicted right now—don't write it down, man, be cool, it's not for the public. I mean, what I go through is private." He is incapable of making "Fuck you" his first response—or even his first thought. Being black has taught him how to allow white people their innocence. For black people, being around white people is sometimes like taking care of babies you don't like, babies who throw up on you again and again, but whom you cannot punish, because they're babies. Eventually, you direct that anger at yourself—it has nowhere else to go.

Juke tries to turn the questioning around a little, through humor, which is part of his pathos. "*I* have some questions," he tells the community researchers, then tries to approximate their straight, white tone: "Who's Pigmeat Markham's Mama?" he asks. "Wilt Chamberlain the tallest colored chap you ever saw?"

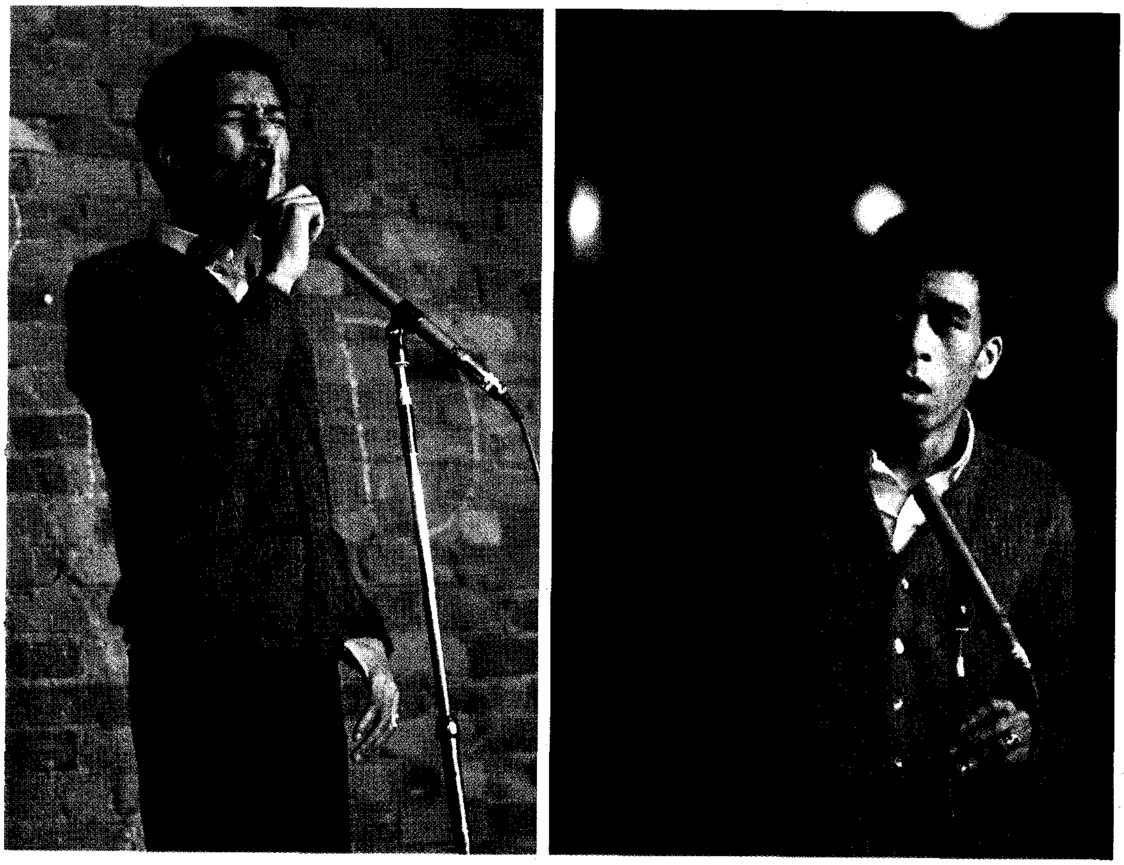
When the white people have left and Juke is about to leave, wrapped in his thin jacket, he turns to Opal and says, "You sweet. You a sweet woman. . . . I'll think aboutcha." His eyes are wide with love and need, and maybe fear or madness. "Be glad when it's spring," he says to Opal. Pause. "Flower!"

"Lily" was never shown again on network television, which is not surprising, given that part of its radicalism is based on the fact that it features a white female star who tries to embody a black woman while communicating with a black man about substantive emotional matters, and who never wears anything as theatrically simple as blackface to do it; Tomlin plays Opal in whiteface, as it were. Nevertheless, "Juke and Opal," which lasts all of nine minutes and twenty-five seconds, and which aired in the same season in which "Hawaii Five-O," "The Waltons," and "Ironside" were among television's top-rated shows, remains historically significant for reasons other than the skin game.

As Juke, Richard Pryor gave one of his relatively few great performances in a project that he had not written or directed. He made use of the poignancy that marks all of his great comedic and dramatic performances, and of the vulnerability—the pathos cradling his sharp wit—that had seduced people into loving him in the first place. Tomlin kept Pryor on the show over objections from certain of the network's executives, and it may have been her belief in him as a performer, combined with the high standards she set for herself and others, that spurred on the competitive-minded Pryor. His language in this scene feels improvised, confessional, and so internalized that it's practically nonverbal: not unlike the best of Pryor's own writing—the stories he tells when he talks shit into a microphone, doing stand-up. And as he sits at Opal's counter we can see him falling in love with Tom-

JIM DEMETROPOULOS

Pryor riffing and digressing in 1964 at Café Wha?: "No one was funnier, dearer, darker, heavier, stronger, m lin's passion for her work, recognizing it as the passion he feels when he peoples the stage with characters who might love him as much as Tomlin-as-Opal seems to now.



ical," Lily Tomlin says of the retired comedian. "He was everything. And his humanity was just glorious."

ALTHOUGH Richard Pryor was more or less forced to retire in 1994, eight years after he discovered that he had multiple sclerosis ("It's the stuff God hits your ass with when he doesn't want to kill ya—just slow ya down," he told *Entertainment Weekly* in 1993), his work as a comedian, a writer, an actor, and a director amounts to a significant chapter not only in late-twentieth-century American comedy but in American entertainment in general. Pryor is best known now for his work in the lackadaisical Gene Wilder buddy movies or for abominations like "The Toy." But far more important was the prescient commentary on the issues of race and sex in America that he presented through standup and sketches like "Juke and Opal"—the heartfelt and acute social observation, the comedy that littered the stage with the trash of the quotidian as it was sifted through his harsh and poetic imagination, and that changed the very definition of the word "entertainment," particularly for a black entertainer.

The subject of blackness has taken a strange and unsatisfying journey through American thought: first, because blackness has almost always had to explain itself to a largely white audience in order to be heard, and, second, because it has generally been assumed to have only one story to tell—a story of oppression that plays on liberal guilt. The writers behind the collective modern ur-text of blackness—James Baldwin, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison—all performed some variation on the theme. Angry but distanced, their rage blanketed by charm, they lived and wrote to be liked. Ultimately, whether they wanted to or not, they in some way embodied the readers who appreciated them most—white liberals.

Richard Pryor was the first black American spoken-word artist to avoid this. Although he reprised the history of black American comedy—picking what he wanted from the work of great storytellers like Bert Williams, Redd Foxx, Moms Mabley, Nipsey Russell, LaWanda Page, and Flip Wilson—he also pushed everything one step further. Instead of adapting to the white perspective, he forced white audiences to follow him into his own experience. Pryor didn't manipulate his audiences' white guilt or their black moral outrage. If he played the race card, it was only to show how funny he looked when he tried to shuffle the deck. And as he made blackness an acknowledged part of the American atmosphere he also brought the issue of interracial love into the country's discourse. In a culture whose successful male Negro authors wrote about interracial sex with a combination of reverence and disgust, Pryor's gleeful, "fuck it" attitude had an effect on the general population which Wright's "Native Son" or Baldwin's "Another Country" had not had. His best work showed us that black men like him and the white women they loved were united in their disenfranchisement; in his life and onstage, he performed the great, largely unspoken story of America.

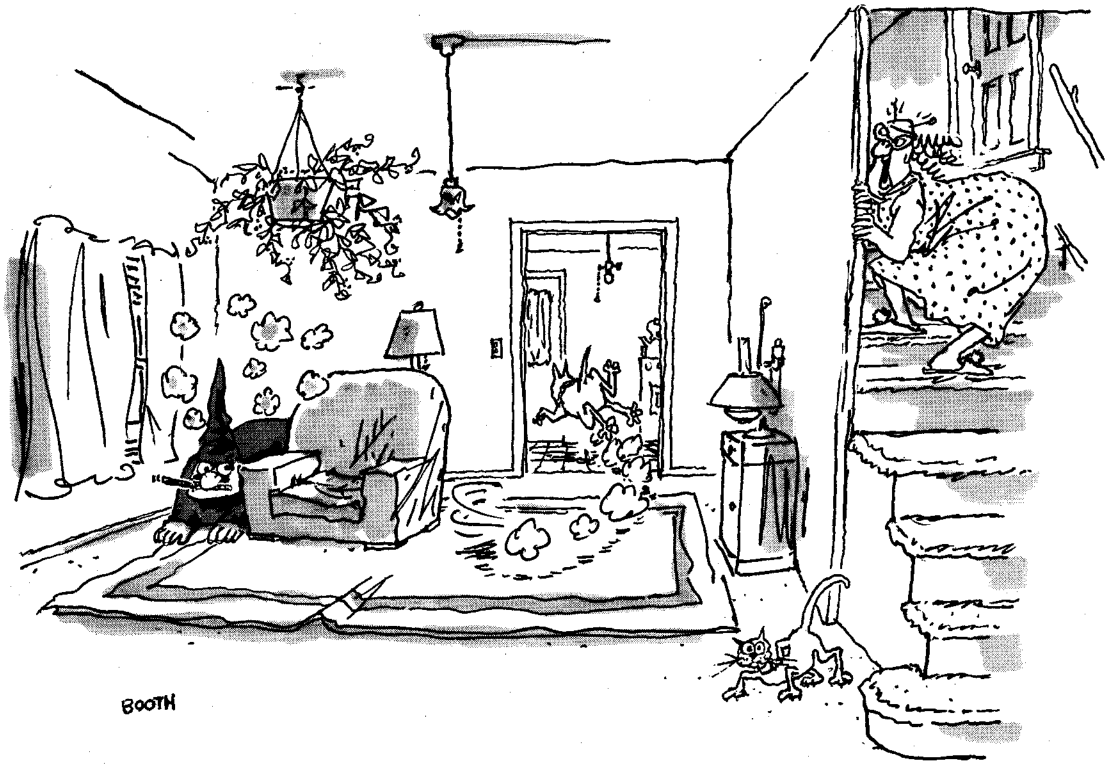
"I LOVE Lily," Pryor said in a *Rolling Stone* interview with David Felton, in 1974, after "Juke and Opal" had aired and he and Tomlin had moved on to other things. "I have a thing about her, a little crush. . . . I get in awe of her. I'd seen her on 'Laugh-In' and shit, and something about her is very sensual, isn't it?"

Sensuality implies a certain physical abandonment, an acknowledgment of the emotional mess that oozes out between the seams that hold our public selves together—and an understanding of the metaphors that illustrate that disjunction. (One of Tomlin's early audition techniques was to tap-dance with taps taped to the soles of her bare feet.) It is difficult to find that human untidiness—what Pryor called "the madness" of everyday life—in the formulaic work now being done by the performers who ostensibly work in the same vein as Pryor and Tomlin. Compare the rawness of the four episodes of a television show that Pryor co-wrote and starred in for NBC in 1977 with any contemporary HBO show by Tracey Ullman (who needs blackface to play a black woman): the first Pryor special opens with a closeup of his face as he announces that he has not had to compromise himself to appear on a network-sponsored show. The camera then pulls back to reveal Pryor seemingly nude but with his genitalia missing.

Pryor's art defies the very definition of the word "order." He based his style on digressions and riffs—the monologue as jam session. He reinvented standup, which until he developed his signature style, in 1971, had consisted largely of borscht-belt-style male comedians telling tales in the Jewish vernacular, regardless of their own religion or background. Pryor managed to make blacks interesting to audiences that were used to responding to a liberal Jewish sensibility—and, unlike some of his colored colleagues, he did so without "becoming" Jewish himself. (Dick Gregory, for example, was a political comedian in the tradition of Mort Sahl; Bill Cosby was a droll Jack Benny.) At the height of his career, Pryor never spoke purely in the complaint mode. He was often baffled by life's complexities, but he rarely told my-wife-made-me-sleep-on-the-sofa jokes or did "bits" whose sole purpose was to "kill" an audience with a boffo punch line. Instead, he talked about characters—black street people, mostly. Because the life rhythm of a black junkie, say, implies a certain drift, Pryor's stories did not have badda-bing conclusions. Instead, they were encapsulated in a physical attitude: each character was represented in Pryor's walk, in his gestures—which always contained a kind of vicarious wonder at the lives he was enacting. Take, for instance, his sketch of a wino in Peoria, Illinois—Pryor's hometown and the land of his imagination—as he encounters Dracula. In the voice of a Southern black man, down on his luck:

> Hey man, say, nigger—you with the cape. . . . What's your name, boy? Dracula? What kind of name is that for a nigger? Where you from, fool? Transylvania? I know where it is, nigger! You ain't the smartest motherfucker in the world, even though you is the ugliest. Oh yeah, you a ugly motherfucker. Why you don't get your teeth fixed, nigger? That shit hanging all out your mouth. Why you don't get you an orthodontist? . . . This is 1975, boy. Get your shit together. What's wrong with your natural? Got that dirt all in the back of your neck. You's a filthy little motherfucker, too. You got to be home 'fore the sun come up? You ain't lyin', motherfucker. See your ass during the day, you liable to get arrested. You want to suck what? You some kind of freak, boy? . . . You ain't suckin' nothing here, junior.

Pryor's two best comedy albums, both of which were recorded during the mid to late seventies—"Bicentennial Nigger" and "That Nigger's Crazy"—are not available on CD, but his two concert films, "Richard Pryor Live in Concert" and "Richard Pryor—Live on the Sunset Strip," which were released in 1979 and 1982, respectively, are out on video. The concert films are excellent examples of what the *Village Voice* critic Carrie Rickey once described as Pryor's ability to "scare us into laughing at his demons—our demons—exorcising them through mass hyperventilation." "Pryor doesn't tell jokes," she wrote, "he tells all, in the correct belief that without punch lines, humor has *more* punch. And pungency." Taken together, the concert films show the full panorama of Pryor's moods: brilliant, boring, insecure, demanding, misogynist, racist, playful, and utterly empathetic.



"Ready, Harold? You're the wicked troll and I'm the garden fairy, and you're very angry because you don't want me passing over your bridge on my way to Grandma's house!"

BEFORE Richard Pryor, there were only three aspects of black maleness to be found on TV or in the movies: the suave, pimp-style blandness of Billy Dee Williams; the big-dicked, quiet machismo of the football hero Jim Brown; and the cable-knit homilies of Bill Cosby. Pryor was the first image we'd ever had of black male fear. Not the kind of Stepin Fetchit noggin-bumpin'-into-walls fear that turned Buckwheat white when he saw a ghost in the "Our Gang" comedies popular in the twenties, thirties, and forties—a character that Eddie Murphy resuscitated in a presumably ironic way in the eighties on "Saturday Night Live." Pryor was filled with dread and panic—an existential fear, based on real things, like racism and lost love. (In a skit on "In Living Color," the actor Damon Wayans played Pryor sitting in his kitchen and looking terrified, while a voiceover said, "Richard Pryor—afraid of absolutely everything.")

"Hi. I'm Richard Pryor." Pause. "Hope I'm funny." That was how he introduced himself to audiences for years, but he never sounded entirely convinced that he cared about being funny. Instead, Pryor embodied the voice of injured humanity. A satirist of his own experience, he revealed what could be considered family secrets—secrets about his past, and about blacks in general, and about his relationship to the black and white worlds he did and did not belong to. In the black community, correctness, political or otherwise, remains part of the mortar that holds lives together. Pryor's comedy was a high-wire act: how to stay funny to a black audience while satirizing the moral strictures that make black American life like no other.

The standard approach, in magazine articles about Pryor, has been to comment on his anger—in an imitation-colloquial language meant to approximate Pryor's voice. "Richard Pryor said it first: *That nigger's crazy*," begins a 1978 article in *People* magazine. And Pryor had fun with the uneasiness that the word "nigger" provoked in others. (Unlike Lenny Bruce, he didn't believe that if you said a word over and over again it would lose its meaning.) Take his great "Supernigger" routine: "Look up in the sky, it's a crow, it's a bat. No, it's Supernigger! Yes, friends, Supernigger, with X-ray vision that enables him to see through everything except Whitey."

In 1980, in the second of three interviews that Barbara Walters conducted with Richard Pryor, this exchange took place:

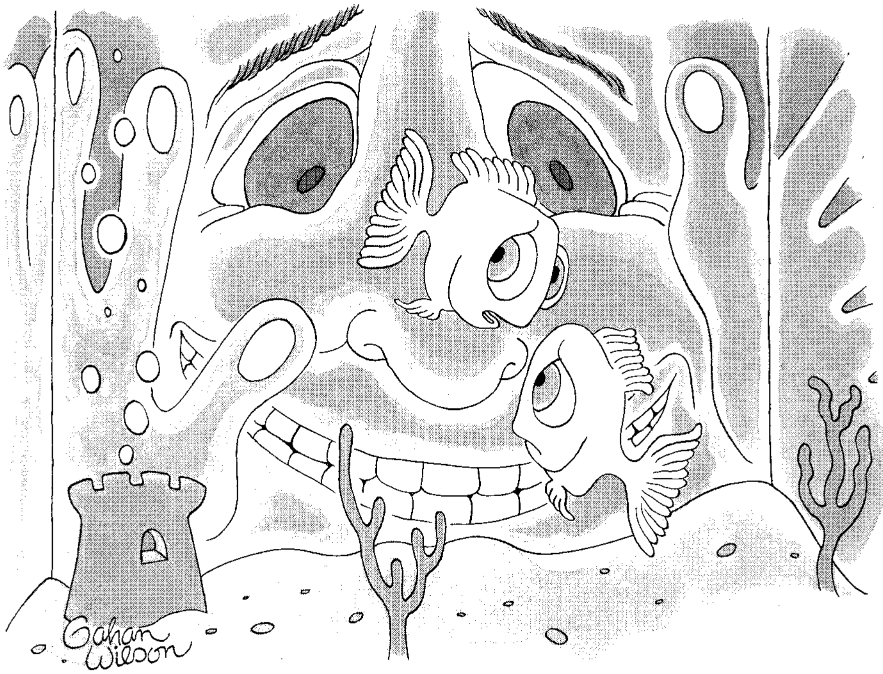
WALTERS: When you're onstage . . . see, it's hard for me to say. I was going to say, you talk about niggers. I can't . . . you can say it. I can't say it.

PRYOR: You just said it.

WALTERS: Yeah, but I feel so . . .

PRYOR: You said it very good.

WALTERS: . . . uncomfortable.



"I think it loves us."

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PRYOR: Well, good. You said it pretty good.

WALTERS: O.K.

PRYOR: That's not the first time you said it. (*Laughter.*)

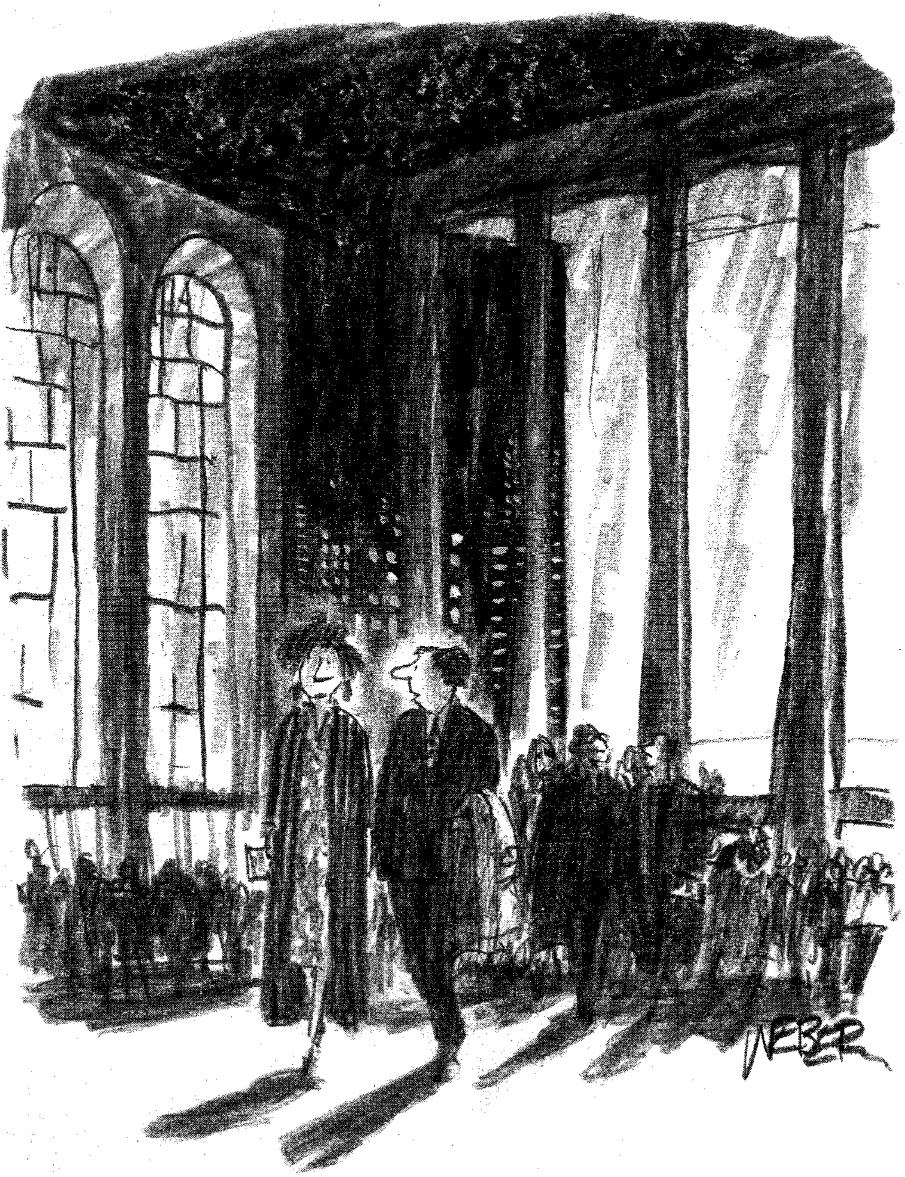
Pryor's anger, though, is actually not as interesting as his self-loathing. Given how much he did to make black pride part of American popular culture, it is arresting to see how at times his blackness seemed to feel like an ill-fitting suit. One gets the sense that he called himself a "nigger" as a kind of preëmptive strike, because he never knew when the term would be thrown at him by whites, by other blacks, or by the women he loved. Because he didn't match any of the prevailing stereotypes of "cool" black maleness, he carved out an identity for himself that was not only "nigger" but "sub-nigger." In "Live on the Sunset Strip" he wears a maraschino-red suit with silk lapels, a black shirt, and a bow tie. He says, "Billy Dee Williams could hang out in this suit and look cool." He struts. "And me?" His posture changes from cocky to pitiful.

Pryor believed that there was something called unconditional love, which he alone had not experienced. But to whom could he, a "sub-nigger," turn for that kind of love? The working-class blacks who made him feel guilty for leaving them behind? His relatives, who acted as if it were their right to hit him up for cash because he'd used their stories to make it? The white people who felt safe with him because he was neurotic—a quality they equated with intelligence? The women who married him for money or status? The children he rarely saw? He was alienated from nearly everyone and everything except his need. This drama was what made Pryor's edge so sharp. He acted out against his fantasy by testing it with rude, brilliant commentary. A perfect role for Pryor might have been Dostoyevsky's antihero, Alexei, in "The Gambler," whose bemused nihilism affects every relationship he attempts. (Pryor once told Walters that he saw people "as the nucleus of a great idea that hasn't come to be yet.") That anti-heroic anger prevents him from just telling a joke. He tells it through clenched teeth. He tells it to stave off bad times. He tells it to look for love.

HIS LIFE, AS A BIT

BLACK guy named Richard Pryor, famous, maybe a little high, appears on the eleventh Barbara Walters special, broadcast on May 29, 1979, and says this about his childhood, a sad house of cards he has glued together with wit:

PRYOR: It was hell, because I had nobody to talk to. I was a child, right, and I grew up seeing my mother . . . and my aunties going



"The music was so loud I couldn't hear myself talk."

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to rooms with men, you understand. . . .

WALTERS: Your grandmother ran a house of prostitution or a whorehouse.

PRYOR: Three houses. Three.

WALTERS: Three houses of prostitution. She was the chief madam.

PRYOR: . . . There were no others.

WALTERS: O.K. . . . Who believed in you? Who cared about you?

PRYOR: Richard Franklin Lennox Thomas Pryor the Third.

The isolation that Richard Pryor feels is elaborated on from time to time, like a bit he can't stop reworking. The sad bit, he could call it, if he did bits anymore, his skinny frame twisting around the words to a story that goes something like this: Born in Peoria, on December 1, 1940. "They called Peoria the model city. That meant it had the niggers under control." Grew up in one of the whorehouses on North Washington Street, which was the house of his paternal grandmother, Marie Carter Pryor Bryant. "She reminded me of a large sunflower—big, strong, bright, appealing," Pryor wrote in his 1995 memoir, "Pryor Convictions." But "she was also a mean, tough, controlling bitch."

Pryor called his father's mother "Mama," despite the fact that he had a mother, Gertrude. When Richard's father, Buck Carter, met Gertrude, she was already involved in Peoria's nefarious underworld, and she soon began working in Marie's whorehouse. Everything in Richard Pryor's world, as he grew up, centered on Marie, and he never quite recovered from that influence. "I come from criminal people," he told one radio interviewer. At the age of six, he was sexually abused by a young man in the neighborhood (who, after Richard Pryor became Richard Pryor, came to his trailer on a film set and asked for his autograph). And Pryor never got over the division he saw in his mother: the way she could separate her emotional self from her battered body and yet was emotionally damaged anyway.

"At least, Gertrude didn't flush me down the toilet, as some did," Pryor wrote in his memoir. "The only person scarier than God was my mother. . . . One time Buck hit Gertrude, and she turned blue with anger and said 'Okay, motherfucker, don't hit me no more. . . . Don't stand in front of me with fucking undershorts on and hit me, motherfucker.' Quick as lightning, she reached out with her finger claws and swiped at my father's dick. Ripped his nutsack off. I was just a kid when I saw this." Pryor records the drama as a born storyteller would—in the details. And the detail that filters through his memory most clearly is the rhythm of Gertrude's speech, its combination of profanity and rhetoric. Not unlike a routine by Richard Pryor.

Pryor soon discovered humor—the only form of manipulation he had in his community of con artists, hookers, and pimps. "I wasn't much taller than my Daddy's shin when I found that I could make my family laugh," Pryor wrote.

> I sat on a railing of bricks and found that when I fell off on purpose everyone laughed, including my grandmother, who made it her job to scare the shit out of people. . . . After a few more minutes of falling, a little dog wandered by and poo-pooed in our yard. I got up, ran to my grandmother, and slipped in the dog poop. It made Mama and the rest laugh again. Shit, I was really onto something then. So I did it a second time. "Look at that boy! He's crazy!" That was my first joke. All in shit.

When Pryor was ten years old, his mother left his father and went to stay with relatives in Springfield, Illinois, but Pryor stayed with his grandmother. In a biography by John and Dennis Williams, Pryor's teacher Marguerite Yingst Parker remembered him as "perpetually exhausted, sometimes lonely, always likable. . . . He was a poor black kid in what was then a predominantly white school, who didn't mingle with his classmates on the playground." Pryor often got through the tedium of school by entertaining his classmates. Eventually, Parker struck a deal with him: if he got to school on time, she would give him a few minutes each week to do a routine in front of the class. Not long afterward, Pryor met Juliette Whittaker, an instructor at the Carver Community Center. "He was about eleven, but looked younger because he was such a skinny little boy. And very bright," she recalled in the Williams book. "We were rehearsing 'Rumpelstiltskin' and he was watching. He asked if he could be in the play. I told him we only had one part left, and he said, 'I don't care. I'll take anything. I just want to be in the play.' . . . He took the script home and, unbeknownst to anybody, he memorized the entire thing."

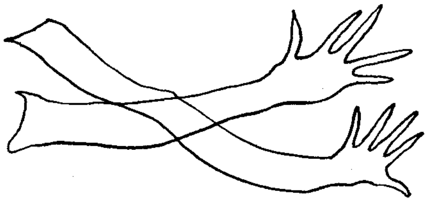
When Pryor was in the eighth grade, a teacher who was fed up with his classroom routines asked him to leave school. He slowly became absorbed into the mundane working-class life that Peoria had to offer, taking a job at a packing plant, running errands. When he was seventeen, he discovered that the black woman he was seeing had also been sleeping with his father. Then, in an attempt to escape, Pryor enlisted in the Army, in 1958. He was stationed in Germany, where he was involved in a racial incident: a young white soldier laughed too hard about the painful black parts in the Douglas Sirk film "Imitation of Life," and Pryor and a number of other black inductees beat and stabbed him. Pryor went to jail, and when he was discharged, in 1960, he returned to his grandmother's twilight world of street life and women for hire.

Pryor had some idea of what he wanted to be: a comedian like the ones he had seen on TV, particularly the black comedians Dick Gregory and Redd Foxx. He began performing at small venues in Peoria, telling topical jokes in the cadence of the time: "You know how to give Mao Tse-tung artificial respiration? No. Good!" The humor then "was kind of rooted in the fifties," the comedian and actor Steve Martin told me. "Very straight jokes, you know. The dominant theme on television and in the public's eye was something Catskills. Jokes. Punch lines." And it was within that form that Pryor began to make a name for himself in the local clubs.

But Pryor was ambitious, and his ambition carried him away from Peoria. In 1961, he left behind his first wife and their child, "because I could," and began working the night-club circuit in places like East St. Louis, Buffalo, and Youngstown, Ohio. In 1963, he made his way to New York. "I opened *Newsweek* and read about Bill Cosby," Pryor told David Felton. "That fucked me up. I said, 'God damn it, this nigger's doin' what *I'm* fixin' to do. I want to be the only nigger, ain't no room for two niggers.' " In New York, Pryor began appearing regularly at Café Wha?. By 1966, he had begun to make it nationally. He appeared on a show hosted by Rudy Vallee called "On Broadway Tonight." Then on Ed Sullivan, Merv Griffin, and Johnny Carson—appearing each time with marcelled hair and wearing a black suit and tie that made him look like an undertaker. But his jokes were like placards that read "Joke": "When I was young I used to think my people didn't like me. Because they used to send me to the store for bread and then they'd move." Or "I heard a knock on the door. I said to my wife, 'There's a knock on the door.' My wife said, 'That's pecul-yar, we ain't got no door.' "

He was fêted as the new Bill Cosby by such show-business luminaries as Bobby Darin and Sid Caesar, and other comedians and writers counselled him to keep it that way: "Don't mention the fact that you're a nigger. Don't go into such bad taste," Pryor remembers being told by a white writer called Murray Roman. "They were gonna try to help me be nothin' as best they could," he said in the *Rolling Stone* interview. "The life I was leading, it wasn't me. I was a robot. Beep. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Sands Hotel. Maids are funny. Beep. . . . I didn't feel good. I didn't feel I could tell anybody to kiss my ass, 'cause I didn't have no ass, you dig?"

A drug habit kicked in. Then, in 1967, while Pryor was doing a show in Las Vegas, he broke down. "I looked out at the audience," Pryor wrote. "The first person I saw was Dean Martin, seated at one of the front tables. He was staring right back at me. . . . I checked out the rest of the audience. They were staring at me as intently as Dean, waiting for that first laugh. . . . I asked myself, Who're they looking at, Rich? . . . And in that flash of introspection when I was unable to find an answer, I crashed. . . . I finally spoke to the sold-out crowd: 'What the fuck am I doing here?' Then I turned and walked off the stage."



He was through with what he'd been doing: "I was a Negro for twenty-three years. I gave that shit up. No room for advancement."

In the following years—1968 through 1971—Pryor worked on material that became more or less what we know today as the Richard Pryor experience. A close friend, the comedian and writer Paul Mooney, took him to the looser, more politicized environs of Berkeley, and Pryor holed up there and wrote.

The black folklorist and novelist Zora Neale Hurston once wrote that, although she had "landed in the crib of negroism" at birth, it hadn't occurred to her until she left her home town that her identity merited a legitimate form of intellectual inquiry. It was only after Pryor had left Peoria and wrested a certain level of success from the world that he was able to see his own negroism, and what made it unique. As Mel Watkins writes, in his book "On the Real Side: Laughing, Lying, and Signifying," after Pryor moved to Berkeley and met the writers Cecil Brown and Ishmael Reed he discovered that "accredited intellectuals" could share "his affection and enthusiasm for the humor and lifestyles of common black folks." Pryor also discovered Malcolm X's speeches and Marvin Gaye's album "What's Going On." Both taught him how to treat himself as just another character in a story being told. He distanced himself from the more confessional Lenny Bruce—whose work had already influenced him to adopt a hipper approach to language—and "Richard Pryor" became no more important than the winos or junkies he talked about.

Pryor began to reconstruct himself first through the use of sound—imagining the sound of Frankenstein taking LSD, for example, or a baby "being birthed." His routines from this time regularly involved gurgles, air blown through pursed lips, beeps. He also began playing with individual words. He would stand in front of an audience and say "God damn" in every way he could think to say it. Or he'd say, "I feel," in a variety of ways that indicated the many different ways he could feel. And as he began to understand how he felt he began to see himself, to create his body before his audience. He talked about the way his breath and his farts smelled, what he wanted from love, where he had been, and what America thought he was.

In those years, Pryor began to create characters that were based on his own experience; he explored the territory and language of his family and his childhood—that fertile and unyielding ground that most artists visit again and again. The producer George Schlatter, who watched Pryor's transformation at a number of clubs in the late sixties and the early seventies, told me, "Richard grew up in a whorehouse. The language he used, he was entitled to it. Now the kids coming up, they use the word 'fuck' and that becomes the joke. Richard used the word 'fuck' on the way to the joke. It was part of his vocabulary. It was part of his life experience." As Pryor began to recall his relatives' voices, he became able to see them from the outside, not without a certain degree of fondness. "My aunt Maxine could suck a neckbone, it was a work of art," he'd say. Or:

> My father was one of them eleven-o'clock niggers. [Voice becoming more high-pitched] "Say, say, where you going, Richard? Say, huh? Well, nigger, you ain't ask nobody if you could go no place. What the fuck, you a man now, nigger? Get a job. I don't give a fuck where you go, be home by eleven. You understand eleven, don't you, nigger? *You can tell time, can't you?* . . . Eleven o'clock, bring your ass here. I don't mean down the street singing with them niggers, either. I ain't getting you ass out of jail no more, motherfucker. That's right. [Pause] And bring me back a paper."

Pryor's routines became richer in depth, in imagination—rather like the characters Edgar Lee Masters created for his brilliant, problematic "Spoon River Anthology." But the most popular and best-known of Pryor's characters—Mudbone, an old black man from Tupelo, Mississippi, whom Pryor created in 1975—also shows how a Pryor character can be *too* well drawn, too much of a crossover tool. Mudbone spoke with a strong Southern dialect and his tales were directly descended from the slave narratives that told (as the critic Darryl Pinckney described them) "of spirits riding people at night, of elixirs dearly bought from conjure men, chicken bones rubbed on those from whom love was wanted." From "Mudbone Goes to Hollywood":

> OLD NEGRO MAN'S VOICE: There was an old man name was Mudbone. . . . And he used to sit right here in front of the barbecue shop and he'd dip snuff . . . and he'd spit. . . . He'd been in a great love affair. That right. He had a woman—he loved her very much—he had to hurt her though 'cause she fucked around on him. He said he knew she was fucking around 'cause I'd leave home and go to work and come back home, toilet seat be up. . . . So I set a little old trap for her there. Went to work early, you know, always did get up early, 'cause I like to hear the birds and shit. . . . So this particular morning, went on to work. Set my trap for this girl. She was pretty, too. Loved her. Sweet as she could be. Breast milk like Carnation milk. So I nailed the toilet seat down and doubled back and I caught that nigger trying to lift it up. So, say, Well, nigger, send your soul to heaven, 'cause your ass is mine up in here.

Mudbone was the character that Pryor's audiences requested again and again. But, as Pauline Kael noted in her review of "Live on the Sunset Strip," Pryor became tired of him: "Voices, ostensibly from the audience, can be heard. One of them calls, 'Do the Mudbone routine,' and, rather wearily, saying that it will be for the last time, Pryor sits on a stool and does the ancient storyteller [who] was considered one of his great creations. And the movie goes thud. . . . Pryor looks defeated."

And he should: Mudbone was the trick he turned and got tired of turning—a safe woolly-headed Negro, a comic version of Katherine Anne Porter's old Uncle Jimbilly. Compare Mudbone, for example, to the innovative and threatening "Bicentennial Nigger" character: "Some nigger two hundred years old in blackface. With stars and stripes on his forehead, lips just a-shining." "Battle Hymn" theme music, and Pryor's voice becomes Stepin Fetchit-like. "But he happy. He happy, 'cause he been here two hundred years. . . . Over here in America. 'I'm so glad you'll took me out of Dahomey.' " Shuckin' and jivin' laugh. " 'I used to could live to be a hundred and fifty, now I dies of the high blood pressure by the time I'm fifty-two.' "

BY 1973, Richard Pryor had become a force in the entertainment industry. He now appeared regularly in such diverse venues as Redd Foxx's comedy club in Central L.A., where the clientele was mostly black, and the Improv, on Sunset Strip, which was frequented by white show-business hipsters. And he behaved as badly as he wanted to wherever he wanted to—whether with women, with alcohol, or with drugs. "I got plenty of money but I'm still a nigger," he told a radio interviewer. He had become Richard Pryor, the self-described "black greasy motherfucker," whose new style of entertainment was just one of many innovations of the decade—in music (Sly and the Family Stone and the Average White Band), in acting (Lily Tomlin and Ronnee Blakley), and in directing (Martin Scorsese and Hal Ashby). Cultural rebellion and political activism defined hip in Hollywood then—an era that is all too difficult to recall now.

"The idea of a black guy going out and saying he fucked a white woman was outrageous . . . but funny," Schlatter told me. "White women dug Richard because he was a naughty little boy, and they wanted some of that. He was talking about real things. Nobody was talking below the waist. Richard went right for the lap, man."

Pryor had directed a film called "Bon Appétit" a few years before—the footage is now lost. "The picture opened with a black maid having her pussy eaten at the breakfast table by the wealthy white man who owned the house where

ISLAND REVELS

New York's annual West Indian American Day Carnival Parade has blossomed into one of the world's biggest neighborhood parties, attracting more than three million revellers to Crown Heights, Brooklyn, each Labor Day. It caps a five-day celebration of Caribbean culture that includes a steel-band competition, authentic Caribbean cuisine, and a costume contest renowned for its wildly extravagant designs. Members of the masquerade band Savage (winner of the contest for three consecutive years) wore vestments inspired by the theme Lands of the Pharaohs as they danced their way along the parade route, down Eastern Parkway, past Grand Army Plaza, and down the stretch of Flatbush Avenue that separates Prospect Park from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Photograph by Alexis Rodriguez-Duarte

she worked," he recalled in "Pryor Convictions." "Then a gang of Black Panther types burst into the house and took him prisoner. As he was led away, the maid fixed her dress and called, '*Bon appétit*, baby!' "

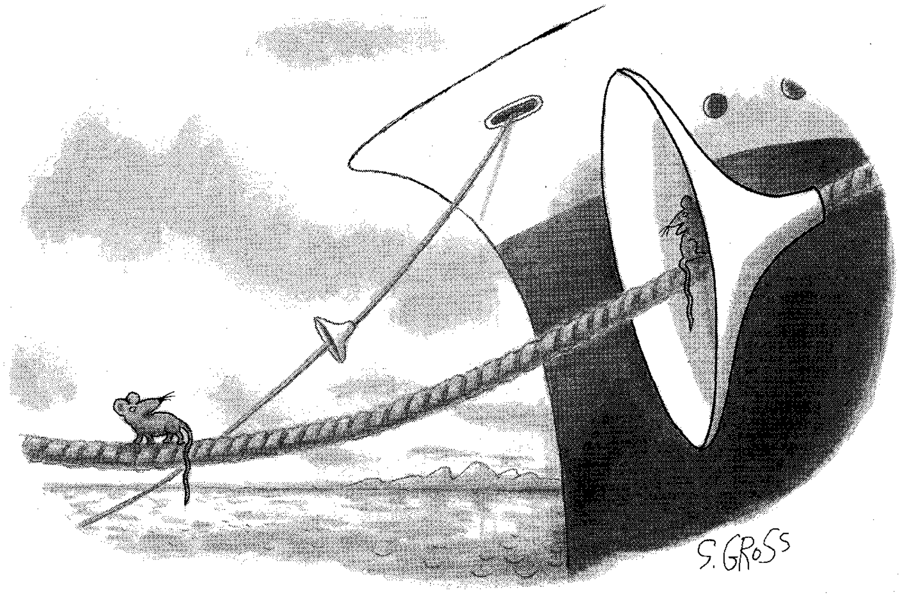
Each time someone asked why "that nigger was crazy," Pryor upped the ante by posing a more profound question. On a trip to a gun shop with David Felton in the early seventies, for example, Pryor asked the salesman, "How come all the targets are black?" The salesman smiled, embarrassed. "Uh, I don't know, Richard," he said, shaking his head. "I just—" "No, I mean I always wondered about that, you know?" Pryor said.

Pryor's edginess caught the attention of Mel Brooks, who was already an established Hollywood figure, and in 1972 Brooks hired him to work on a script called "Black Bart," the story of a smooth, Gucci-wearing black sheriff in the eighteen-seventies American West. This was to be Pryor's real crossover gig, not only as a writer but as an actor, but the leading role eventually went to Cleavon Little. Whatever the reason for not casting Pryor (some people who were involved with the movie told me that no one could deal with his drinking and his drug use), there are several scenes in the film (renamed "Blazing Saddles") that couldn't have been written by anyone else. One scene didn't make it in. It shows a German saloon singer, Lili von Dyke, in her darkened dressing room with Bart, whom she is trying to seduce.

> LILI: Here, let me sit next to you. Tell me, *schatzi*, is it true vat zey say about the way you people are gifted? . . . Oh, oh, it's twue, it's twue, it's twue, it's twue.
>
> BART: Excuse me, you're sucking my arm.

Pryor's best performances (in films he didn't write himself) date from these years. There is his poignant and striking Oscar-nominated appearance in Sidney J. Furie's 1972 film, "Lady Sings the Blues." As the Piano Man to Diana Ross's Billie Holiday, Pryor gives a performance that is as emotional and as surprising as his work in "Juke and Opal." And then there is his brilliant comic turn as Sharp-Eye Washington, the disreputable private detective in Sidney Poitier's 1974 film, "Uptown Saturday Night"—a character that makes use of Pryor's ability to convey paranoia with his body: throughout the movie, he looks like a giant exclamation point. And as Zeke Brown, in "Blue Collar," Paul Schrader's 1978 film about an automobile plant in Detroit, Pryor gives his greatest sustained—if fraught—film performance. In an interview with the writer Kevin Jackson, Schrader recalls his directorial début:

> There were . . . problems. Part of it was to do with Richard's style of acting. Being primarily versed in stand-up comedy he had a creative life of between three and four takes. The first one would be good, the second would be real good, the third would be terrific, and the fourth would probably start to fall off. . . . The other thing Richard would do when he felt his performance going flat was to improvise and change the dialogue just like he would have done in front of a live audience, and he would never tell me or anyone what he was going to do.

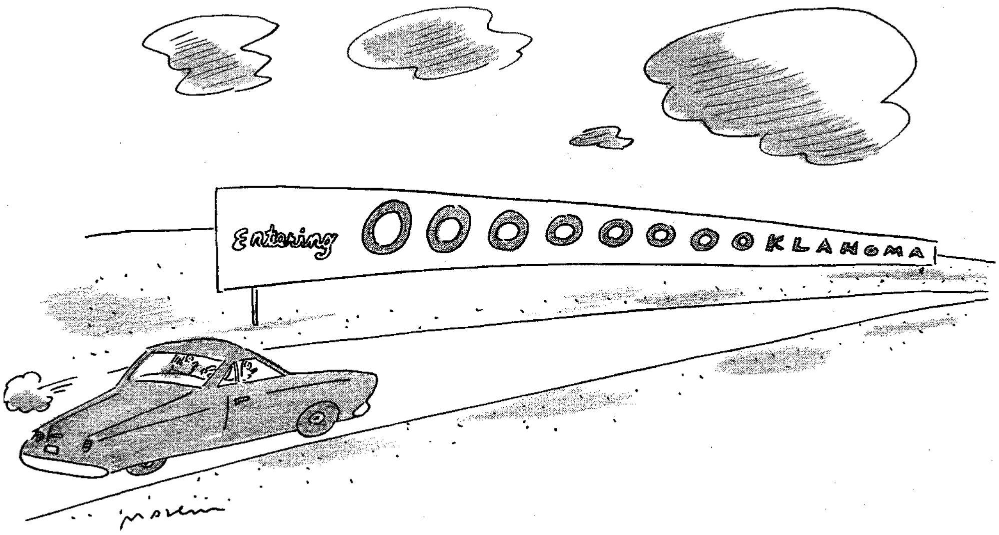


"Hey! Get a load of the acoustics!"

Generally, though, Pryor had a laissez-faire attitude toward acting. One always feels, when looking at the work that he did in bad movies ranging from "You've Got to Walk It Like You Talk It or You'll Lose That Beat," in 1971, to "Superman III," released twelve years and twenty-seven films later, that Pryor had a kind of contempt for these mediocre projects—and for his part in them. Perhaps no character was as interesting to Richard Pryor as Richard Pryor. He certainly didn't work hard to make us believe that he was anyone other than himself as he walked through shameful duds like "Adiós Amigo." On the other hand, his fans paid all the love and all the money in the world to see him be himself: they fed his vanity, and his vanity kept him from being a great actor.

IN September, 1977, Lily Tomlin asked Pryor to be part of a benefit at the Hollywood Bowl to oppose Proposition Six, a Californian anti-gay initiative. Onstage, Pryor started doing a routine about the first time he'd sucked dick. The primarily gay members of the audience hooted at first—but they didn't respond well to Pryor's frequent use of the word "faggot." Pryor's rhythm was thrown off. "Shit . . . this is really weird," he exploded. "This is an evening about human rights. And I am a human being. . . . I just wanted to test you to your motherfucking *soul*. I'm doing this shit for *nuthin'*. . . . When the niggers was burning down Watts, you motherfuckers was doin' what you wanted to do on Hollywood Boulevard . . . didn't give a shit about it." And as he walked offstage: "You Hollywood faggots can kiss my happy, *rich* black ass."

Pryor liked to tell the truth, but he couldn't always face it himself. Although he spent years searching for an idealized form of love, his relationships were explosive and short-lived. From 1969 to 1978, he had three serious relationships or marriages—two with white women, one with a black woman—and two children. There were also affairs with film stars such as Pam Grier and Margot Kidder, and one with a drag queen. He was repeatedly in trouble for beating up women and hotel clerks. His sometimes maudlin self-involvement when a woman left him rarely involved any kind of development or growth. It merely encouraged the self-pity that informed much of his emotional life.



By the late seventies, Pryor was freebasing so heavily that he left his bedroom only to go to work and even then only if he could smoke some more on the set. He was even more paranoid than he'd always been and showed very little interest in the world. The endless cycle of dependence—from the drinking to the coke to the other drugs he needed to come down from the coke—began to destroy his health. Then, in 1980, he tried to break the cycle by killing himself. He wrote his own account of the episode, in "Pryor Convictions":

> After free-basing without interruption for several days in a row, I wasn't able to discern one day from the next. . . . "I know what I have to do," I mumbled. "I've brought shame to my family. . . . I've destroyed my career. I know what I have to do." . . . I reached for the cognac bottle on the table in front of me and poured it all over me. Real natural, methodical. As the liquid soiled my body and clothing, I wasn't scared. . . . I was in a place called There. . . . I picked up my Bic lighter. . . . WHOOSH! I was engulfed in flame. . . . Sprinting down the driveway, I went out the gates and ran down the street. . . . Two cops tried to help me. My hands and face were already swollen. My clothes burnt in tatters. And my smoldering chest smelled like a burned piece of meat. . . . "Is there?" I asked. "Is there what?" someone asked. "Oh Lord, there is no help for a poor widow's son, is there?"

Pryor was in critical condition at the Sherman Oaks Community Hospital for seven weeks. When Jennifer Lee—a white woman, whom he married a year later—went to visit him, he described himself as a "forty-year-old burned-up nigger." And, in a sense, Pryor never recovered from his suicide attempt. "Live on the Sunset Strip," which came out three years later, is less a pulled-together performance than the performance of a man trying to pull himself together. He could no longer tell the truth. He couldn't even take the truth. And, besides, people didn't want the truth (a forty-year-old burned-up nigger). They wanted Richard Pryor—"sick," but not ill.

WHITE HONKY BITCH

JENNIFER LEE was born and grew up in Ithaca, New York, one of three daughters of a wealthy lawyer. In her twenties, she moved to L.A. to become an actress, had affairs with Warren Beatty and Roman Polanski, and appeared in several B movies. She met Pryor in 1977, when she was hired to help redecorate his house. "We sat on an oversized brass bed in Richard's house," she wrote in an article for *Spin* magazine. "He was blue—heartsick over a woman who was 'running game' on him. He was putting a major dent in a big bottle of vodka. You could feel the tears and smell the gardenias, even with hip, white-walled nasal passages." Since that day, she told me, laughing, as we sat in the garden at the Château Marmont, in L.A., last winter, she has always been "the head bitch."

As Jennifer talked with me that afternoon, dressed in black leather pants and a black blazer, her white skin made even whiter by her maroon lipstick, I thought of the photographs I had seen of her with Pryor, some of which were reproduced in her 1991 memoir, "Tarnished Angel." These images were replaced by others: the white actress Shirley Knight berating Al Freeman, Jr., in the film version of Amiri Baraka's powerful play, "Dutchman," and Diane Arbus's haunting photograph of a pregnant white woman and her black husband sitting on a bench in Washington Square in the sixties. Then I thought of Pryor's routines on interracial sex. From "Black Man, White Woman":

> Don't ever marry a white woman in California. A lot of you sisters probably saying "Don't marry a white woman anyway, nigger." [Pause] Shit. . . . Sisters look at you like you killed yo' Mama when you out with a white woman. You can't laugh that shit off, either. [High-pitched, fake-jovial voice] "Ha ha she's not with me."

From a routine entitled "Black & White Women":

> There really is a difference between white women and black women. I've dated both. Yes, I have. . . . Black women, you be suckin' on their pussy and they be like, "Wait, nigger, shit. A little more to the left, motherfucker. You gonna suck the motherfucker, get down." You can fuck white women and if they don't come they say, "It's all right, I'll just lay here and use a vibrator."

Pryor was not only an integrationist but an integrationist of white women and black men, one of the most taboo adult relationships. The judgments that surround any interracial couple: *White girls who are into black dudes are sluts. White dudes aren't enough for them; only a big-dicked black guy can satisfy them. Black dudes who are into white girls don't like their kind. And, well, you know how they treat their women: they abuse them; any white girl who goes out with one is a masochist.* The air in America is thick with these misconceptions, and in the seventies it was thicker still. Plays and films like "A Taste of Honey," "A Patch of Blue," "Deep Are the Roots," "All God's Chillun' Got Wings," and "The Great White Hope" gave a view of the black man as both destroyer and nursemaid to a galaxy of white women who were sure to bring him down. But no real relationships exist in these works. The black male protagonists are more illustration than character. (Though they make excellent theatrical agitprop: what a surplus of symbols dangles from their mythic oversized penises!) In his work, Pryor was one of the first black artists to unknot the narrative of that desire and to expose it. In life he had to live through it as painfully as anyone else.

When Jennifer Lee first slept with Pryor, she told me, she touched his hair

"Remember how big and clunky the first ones were?"

and he recoiled: its texture was all the difference in the world between them. That difference is part of the attraction for both members of interracial couples. "Ain't no such thing as an ugly white woman," says a character in Eldridge Cleaver's 1968 polemic, "Soul on Ice." In some ways Pryor found it easier to be involved with white women than with black women: he could blame their misunderstandings on race, and he could take advantage of the guilt they felt for what he suffered as a black man.

Yet, while Pryor may have felt both attracted by and ashamed of his difference from Lee, he also pursued her through all his drug blindness and self-absorption because he saw something of himself in her. "What no one gets," Lee told me, "is that one of the ways Richard became popular was through women falling in love with him—they saw themselves in him, in his not fitting in, the solitude of it all, and his willingness to be vulnerable as women are. And disenfranchised, of course, as women are." That black men and white women were drawn to each other through their oppression by white men was a concept I had first seen expressed in the feminist Shulamith Firestone's book "The Dialectic of Sex." There is a bond in oppression, certainly, but also a rift because of it—a contempt for the other who marks you as different—which explains why interracial romance is so often informed by violence. Cleaver claimed that he raped white women because that was the only kind of empowerment he could find in his brutal world. At times, Pryor directed a similar rage at Jennifer Lee, and she, at times, returned it.

LIFE in the eighties: Pryor gets up. Does drugs. Drives over to the Comedy Store to work out a routine. Has an argument with Jennifer after a party. Maybe they fly to Hawaii. Come back in a week or so. Some days, Pryor is relaxed in his vulnerability. Other days, he tries to throw her out of the car. Richard's Uncle Dickie says about Jennifer, who is from an Irish family, "Irish are niggers turned inside out." Richard says about Jennifer, "The tragedy was that Jennifer could keep up with me." And she did. They married in 1981. They divorced in 1982.

With Lee, Pryor took the same trajectory that he had followed with many women before her. He began with a nearly maudlin reverence for her beauty and ended with paranoia and violence. In "Tarnished Angel," Lee describes Pryor photographing her as she was being sexually attacked by a drug dealer he hung out with—a lowlife in the tradition of the people he had grown up with. Pryor could be brutally dissociative and sadistic, especially with people he cared about: he did not separate their degradation from his own. He was also pleased when Lee was jealous of the other women he invariably became involved with. And when she left him, she claims, he stalked her.

Pryor got married again in 1986, to Flynn Be-Laine, two years after she'd given birth to his son Steven. Lee moved back to New York, where she wrote a challenging review of Pryor's film "Jo Jo Dancer, Your Life Is Calling," for *People:*

> Well, Richard, you blew it. I went to see "Jo Jo Dancer." . . . I went looking for the truth, the real skinny. Well, guess what? It wasn't there. . . . How sad. After all, it was you who was obsessed by the truth, be it onstage or in your private life. . . . You had no sacred cows. That's why I fell in love with you, why I hung in through the wonder and madness. . . . Listen to your white honky bitch, Richard: Ya gotta walk it like you talk it or you'll lose that beat.

But later the same year, when Lee interviewed Pryor for *Spin*, they had reached a kind of détente:

> LEE: What about the rage, the demons?
> PRYOR: They don't rage much anymore.
> LEE: Like a tired old monster?
> PRYOR: Very tired. He hath consumed me.
> LEE: Has this lack of rage quieted your need to do standup?
> PRYOR: Something has. I'm glad it happened *after* I made money.

Pryor had gone sober in 1983 and he soon recognized that, along with alcohol, he needed to relinquish some of the ruthless internal navigations that had given his comedy its power. He performed live less and less. There were flashes of the old brilliance: on Johnny Carson, for example, when he responded to false rumors that he had AIDS. And when his public raised its fickle refrain—"He's sick, he's washed up"—he often rallied, but in the last eight years of his performing life he became a more conventional presence.

Pryor divorced Flynn in 1991, and in 1994 he placed a call to Jennifer. He was suffering from degenerative multiple sclerosis, he told her, and wouldn't be able to work much longer. “He said, ‘My life’s a mess. Will you help me out?’ ” she recalls. “I thought long and hard about it. . . . I wasn’t sure it would last, because Richard loves to manipulate people and see them dance. But, see, he can’t do that anymore, because he finally bottomed. That’s the only reason Richard is allowing his life to be in any kind of order right now.”

Lee came back to Pryor in July of that year. “When I got there, he was in this ridiculous rental for, like, six thousand dollars a month,” she told me. “Five bedrooms, seven bathrooms. Honey, it was classic. You couldn’t write it better.” Lee helped him to find a smaller house in Encino, and she has cared for him since then. He has two caregivers and is bathed and dressed in a collaborative effort that has shades of Fellini. He spends his days in a custom-made wheelchair, while others read to him or give him physical or speech therapy. Every Friday, he goes to the movies. According to Lee, he can speak well when he wants to, but he doesn’t often want to. “Sometimes he’ll say, ‘Leave me the fuck alone, Jenny,’ ” she tells me, laughing. “Just the other day, Richard was sitting, staring out the window, and his caregiver said, ‘Mr. Richard, what are you thinking about?’ He said, ‘I’m thinking about how much money I pay all you motherfuckers.’ ” He doesn’t see his children much, or his other ex-wives, or the people he knew when he still said things like “I dig show business. I do. . . . I wake up every morning and I kiss it. Show business, you fine bitch.”

BLUE MOVIE

“WAS that corny?” Lily Tomlin said to me one afternoon last winter when I told her I’d heard that certain CBS executives hadn’t wanted her to kiss Pryor good night at the close of “Lily,” back in 1973. After all, Pryor was then a disreputable black comic with an infamous foul mouth, and Lily Tomlin had just come from “Laugh-In,” where she had attracted nationwide attention. Tomlin kissed him anyway, and it was, I think, the first time I had ever seen a white woman kiss a black man—I was twelve—and it was almost certainly the first time I had ever seen Richard Pryor.

Tomlin and I were sitting with Jane Wagner, her partner and writer for thirty years, in a Cuban restaurant—one of their favorite places in Los Angeles. Tomlin and Wagner were the only white people there.

“We just loved Richard,” Tomlin told me. “He was the only one who could move you to tears. No one was funnier, dearer, darker, heavier, stronger, more radical. He was everything. And his humanity was just glorious.”

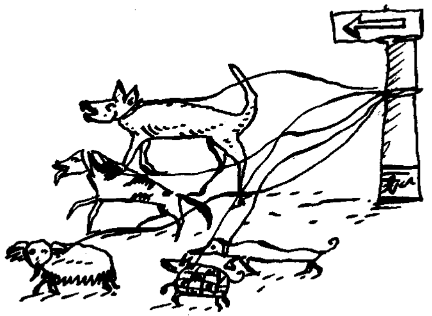
“What a miracle ‘Juke and Opal’ got on,” Wagner said. “The network treated us as if we were total political radicals. I guess we were. And they hated Richard. They were so threatened by him.”

CBS had insisted that Tomlin and Wagner move “Juke and Opal” to the end of the show, so that people wouldn’t switch channels in the middle, bringing down the ratings. “It threw the whole shape of the show off,” Tomlin recalled in a 1974 interview. “It made ‘Juke and Opal’ seem like some sort of Big Message, which is not what I intended. . . . I wasn’t out to make any, uh, heavy statements, any real judgments.”

“Everybody kept saying it wasn’t funny, but we wanted to do little poems. I mean, when you think of doing a drug addict in prime time!” Wagner told me. And what they did *is* a poem of sorts. It was one of the all too few opportunities that Tomlin had to showcase, on national television, the kind of performance she and Pryor pioneered.

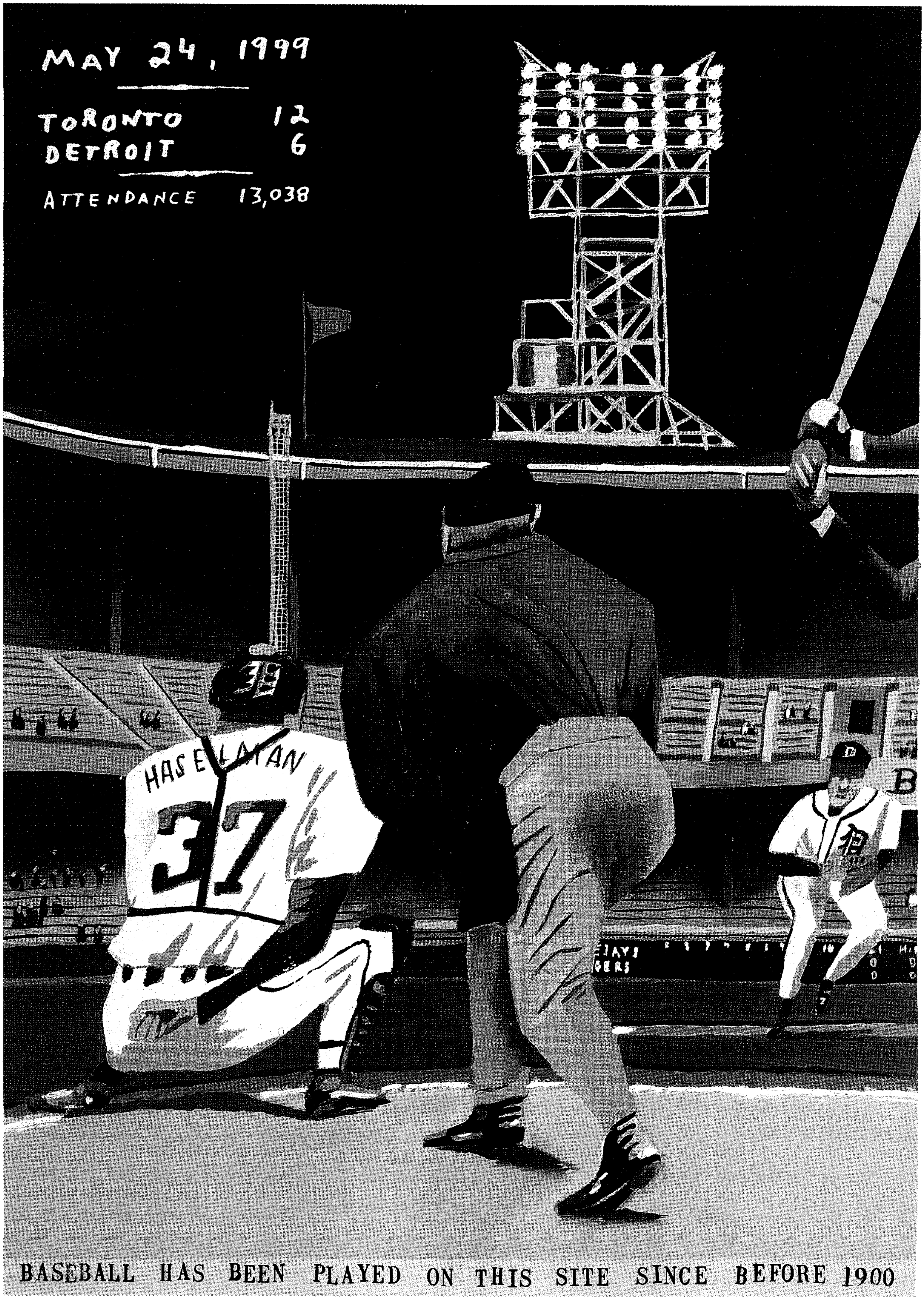
“Lily and Richard were a revolution, because they based what they did on real life, its possibilities,” Lorne Michaels, the producer of “Saturday Night Live,” told me. “You couldn’t do that kind of work now on network television, because no one would understand it. . . . Lily and Richard were the exemplars of a kind of craft. They told us there was a revolution coming in the field of entertainment, and we kept looking to the left, and it didn’t come.”

IT is odd to think that Richard Pryor’s period of pronounced popularity and power lasted for only a decade, really—from 1970 to 1980. But comedy is rock and roll, and Pryor had his share of hits. The enormous territory he carved out for himself remains more or less his own. Not that it hasn’t been scavenged by other comedians: Eddie Murphy takes on Pryor’s belligerent side, Martin Lawrence his fearful side, Chris Rock his hysteria, Eddie Griffin his ghoulish goofiness. But none of these comedians approaches Pryor’s fundamental strangeness, vulnerability, or political intensity. Still, their work demonstrates the power of his influence: none of them would exist at all were it not for Richard Pryor. The actor Richard Belzer described him to me as “the ultimate artistic beacon.” “It was like he was the sun and we were planets,” Belzer said. “He was the ultimate. He took socially complex situations and made you think about them, and yet you laughed. He’s so brilliantly funny, it was revelatory. He’s one of those rare people who define a medium.”



According to Lee, Pryor has been approached by a number of artists who see something of themselves in him. Damon Wayans and Chris Rock wanted to star in a film version of Pryor’s life. The Hughes Brothers expressed interest in making a documentary. In 1998, the Kennedy Center gave Pryor its first Mark Twain Prize, and Chevy Chase, Whoopi Goldberg, Robin Williams, and others gathered to pay tribute to him. Pryor’s written acceptance of the award, however, shows a somewhat reluctant acknowledgment of his status as an icon: “It is nice to be regarded on par with a great white man—now that’s funny!” he wrote. “Seriously, though, two things people throughout history have had in common are hatred and humor. I am proud that, like Mark Twain, I have been able to use humor to lessen people’s hatred!”

In some ways, Pryor probably realizes that his legendary status has weakened the subversive impact of his work. People are quick to make monuments of anything they live long enough to control. It’s not difficult to see how historians will view him in the future. An edgy comedian. A Mudbone. But will they take into account the rest of his story: that essentially American life, full of contradictions; the life of a comedian who had an excess of both empathy and disdain for his audience, who exhausted himself in his search for love, who was a confusion of female and male, colored and white, and who acted out this internal drama onstage for our entertainment. ◆


MAY 24, 1999
TORONTO 12
DETROIT 6
ATTENDANCE 13,038
HASELMAN
37

BASEBALL HAS BEEN PLAYED ON THIS SITE SINCE BEFORE 1900

THE SPORTING SCENE

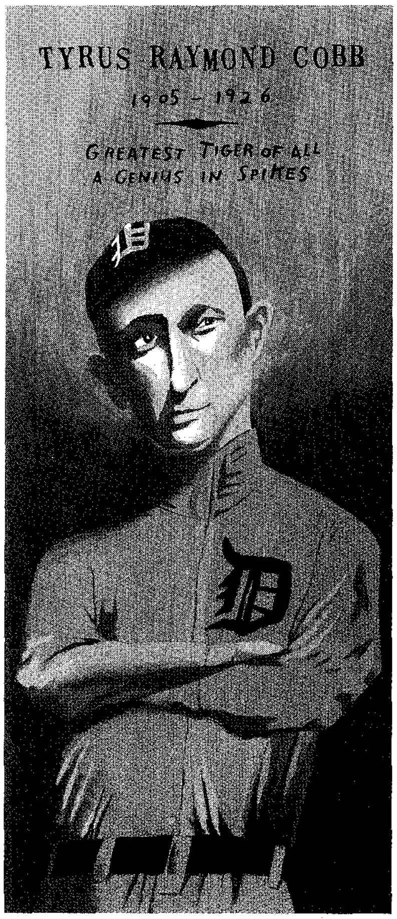
HAUNTED HOUSES

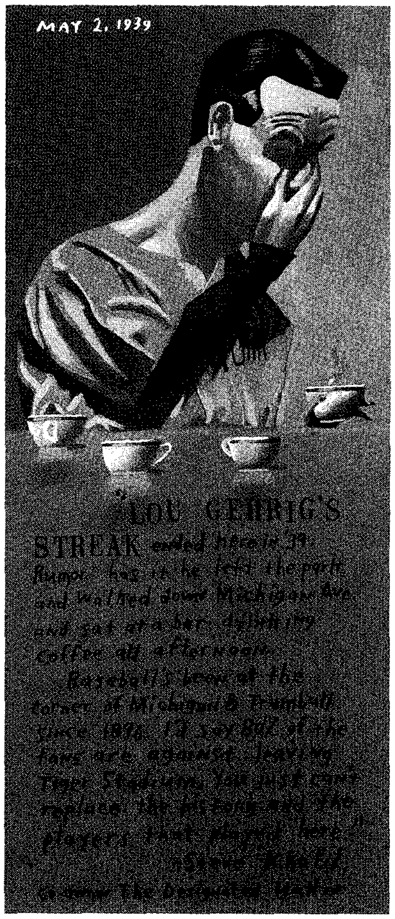
What do the fans remember when an old ballpark shuts down?

BY MARK ULRIKSEN

WHINING and regret outweigh the sunshine in these baseball paintings by Mark Ulriksen: it's plain that he's a fan. Noting the imminent departure of four old major-league ballparks, he has consulted the folks in the stands rather than the preservationists or the parvenu owners, and finds that bad weather and habitual second-division finishes are as much on their minds as visions of a long-gone Hall of Famer running out from under his cap in center field or Bill Freehan blocking Lou Brock off home plate on a famous October afternoon. Fans are accustomed to losing, and the passing of a beloved, square-cornered downtown park feels like another free-agent pitcher leaving town at the end of the season, only more so. The hated Seattle Kingdome—its dour concrete walls lent a yellowish tinge to the Mariners' so-so adventures—closed down in June, and now Ken Griffey, Jr., wants out of its successor, Safeco Field, so he can go play with a winner someplace. And who knows—perhaps warm toes will sufficiently reward Giants fans next spring, when the club vacates 3Com (née Candlestick) Park and moves to Pacific Bell Park, on a more tropical stretch of the Bay.

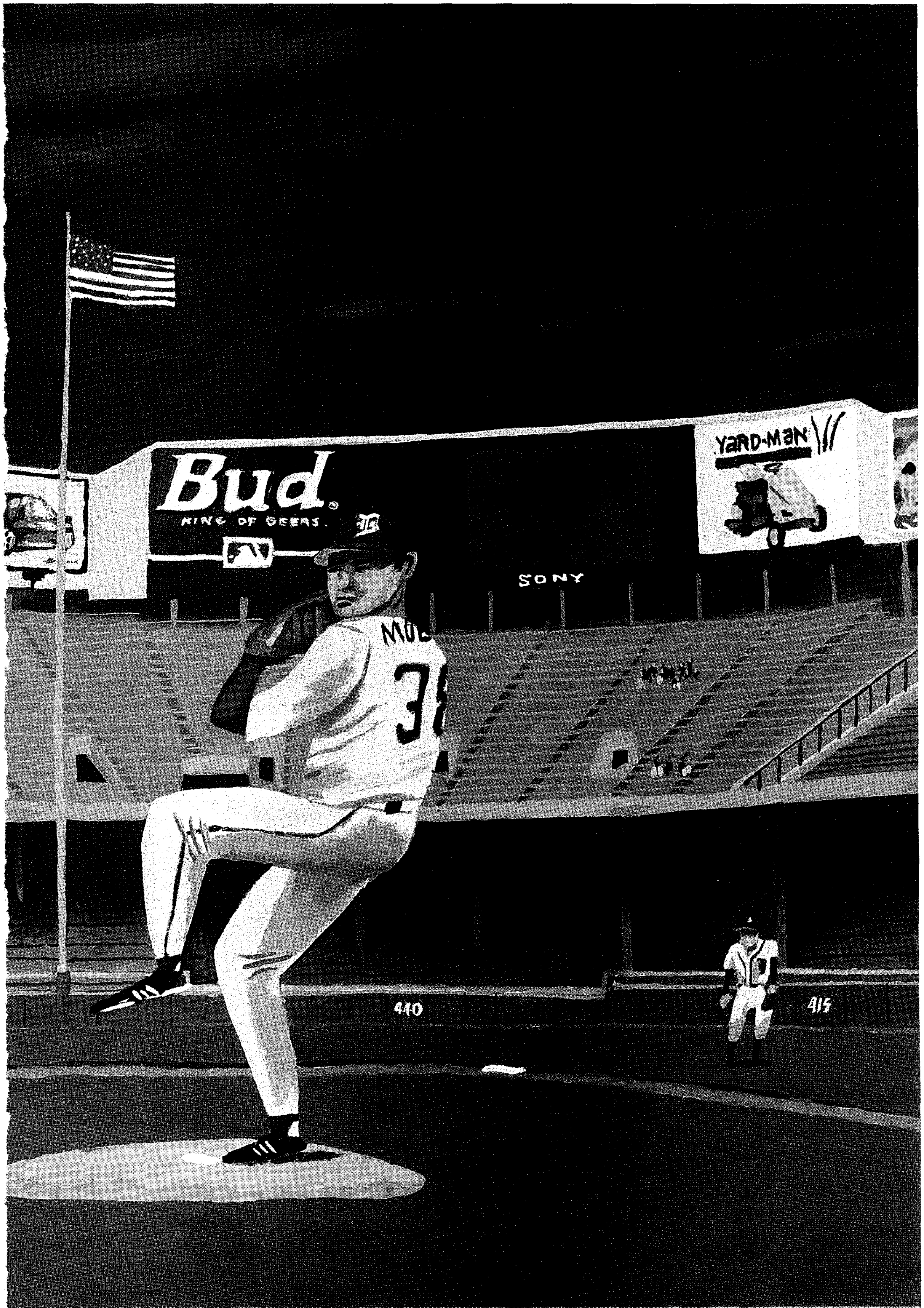
What seems certain is that the new parks in Seattle and San Francisco, Detroit and Houston (and, a bit later, Milwaukee) will accrue a comforting quirkiness of their own, despite the planners. A new Fenway Park, almost in the works in Boston, amid protests, and scheduled to open by 2003, will reproduce the dimensions of the old one, Green Monster and all, but it won't be the same. (Will another passing seagull drop a midgame smelt on the mound there, as happened before the undistractable right-hander Ellis Kinder, in the course of a 4–2 win in 1947? Probably not.) The cool indoor bubble of the Astrodome, a great wonder in 1965, became more wondrous still when sunlight pouring through its Lucite roof made it impossible for outfielders to see descending fly balls; they took to wearing helmets out there, in self-protection. A sensible painting-over of the ceiling killed off the grass, which led to the arrival of AstroTurf—a plastic kudzu of the sport, it turned out.


TYRUS RAYMOND COBB
1905 - 1926
GREATEST TIGER OF ALL
A GENIUS IN SPIKES

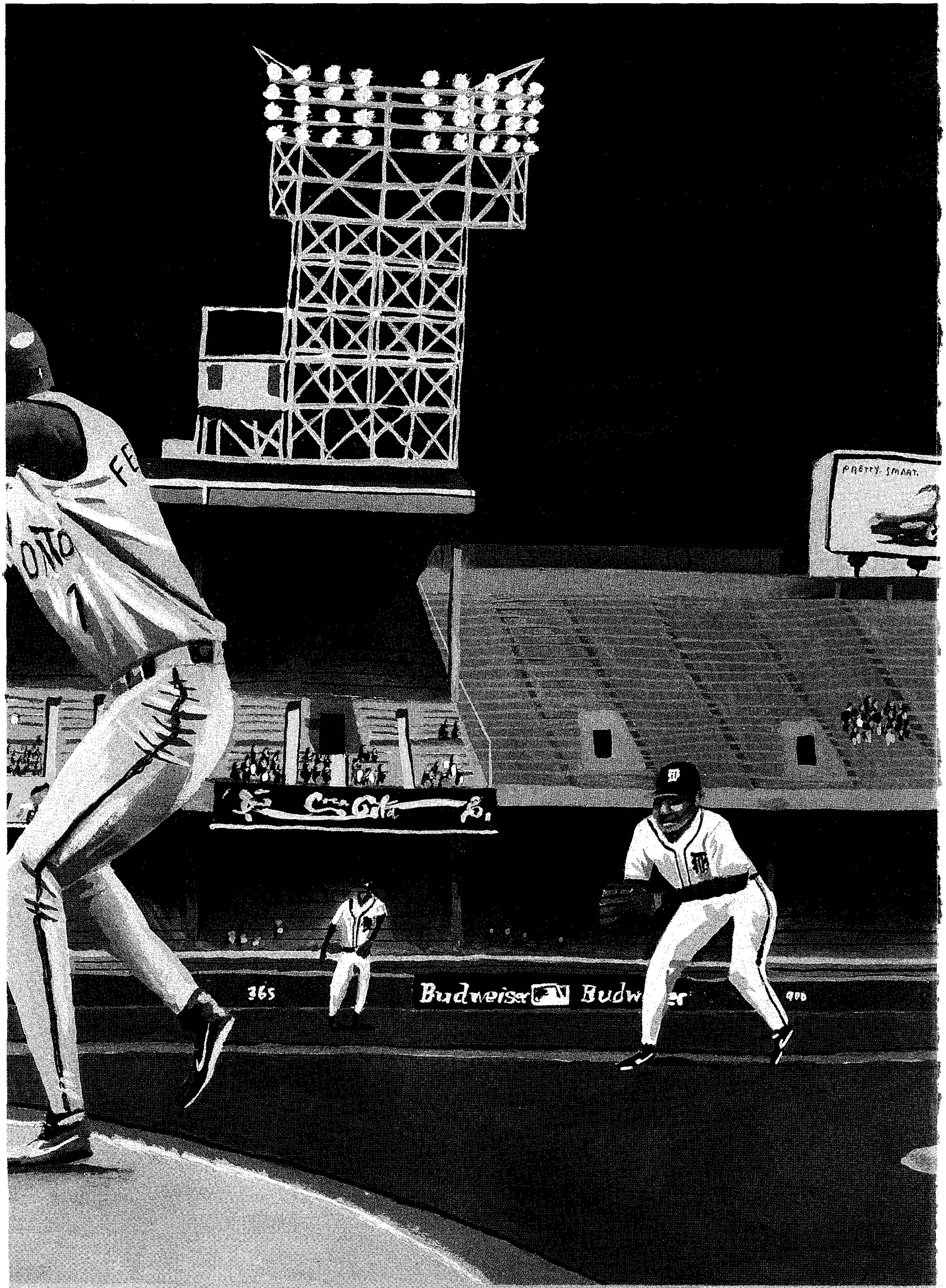

MAY 2, 1939
LOU GEHRIG'S
STREAK ended here in 39.
Rumor has it he left the park
and walked down Michigan Ave.
and sat at a bar drinking
coffee all afternoon.
Baseball's been at the
corner of Michigan & Trumbull
since 1896. I'd say 80% of the
fans are against leaving
Tiger Stadium. You just can't
replace the history and the
players that played here.

Oddity adds a sweetness to these doomed old yards, and Ulriksen's airborne Giants immortals appear to be smiling wryly as they blow by, wondering (like fans) what amazing levels their stats might have reached without the breeze. Tiger Stadium, darkly unfolding to the left, will be the biggest loss since the Polo Grounds disappeared, in 1963, but the artist has saved it for us in exactly the right way. The Tigers are losing a hideous laughter, and most of the tiny crowd has gone home. The handful that remain are kids or great fans, and they will be back next year for more of the same, wherever the game happens to be played.

—ROGER ANGELL

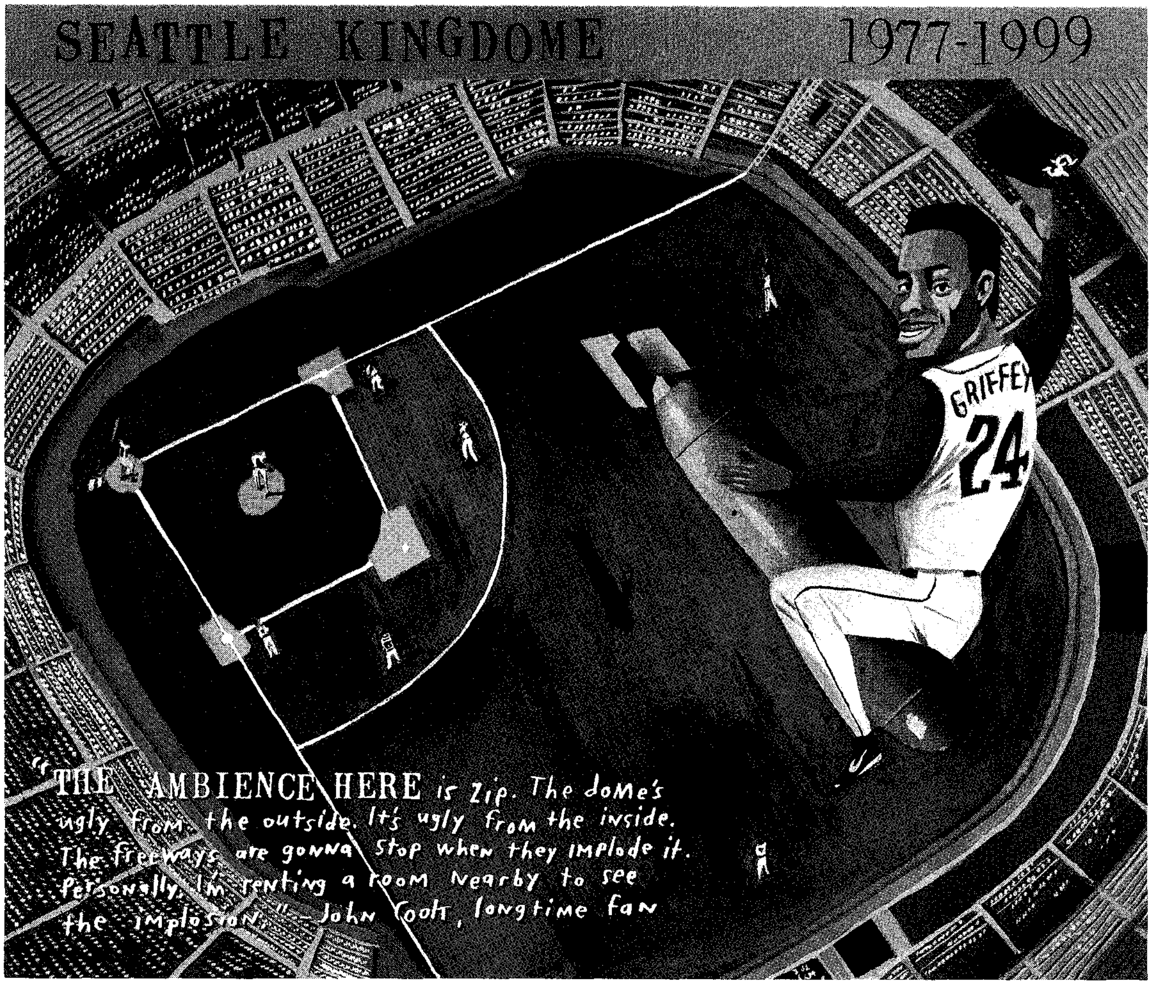

Bud
KING OF BEERS.
YARD-MAN
SONY
MO
38
440
415

RT AS A CHARTER MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LEAGUE IN 1901.

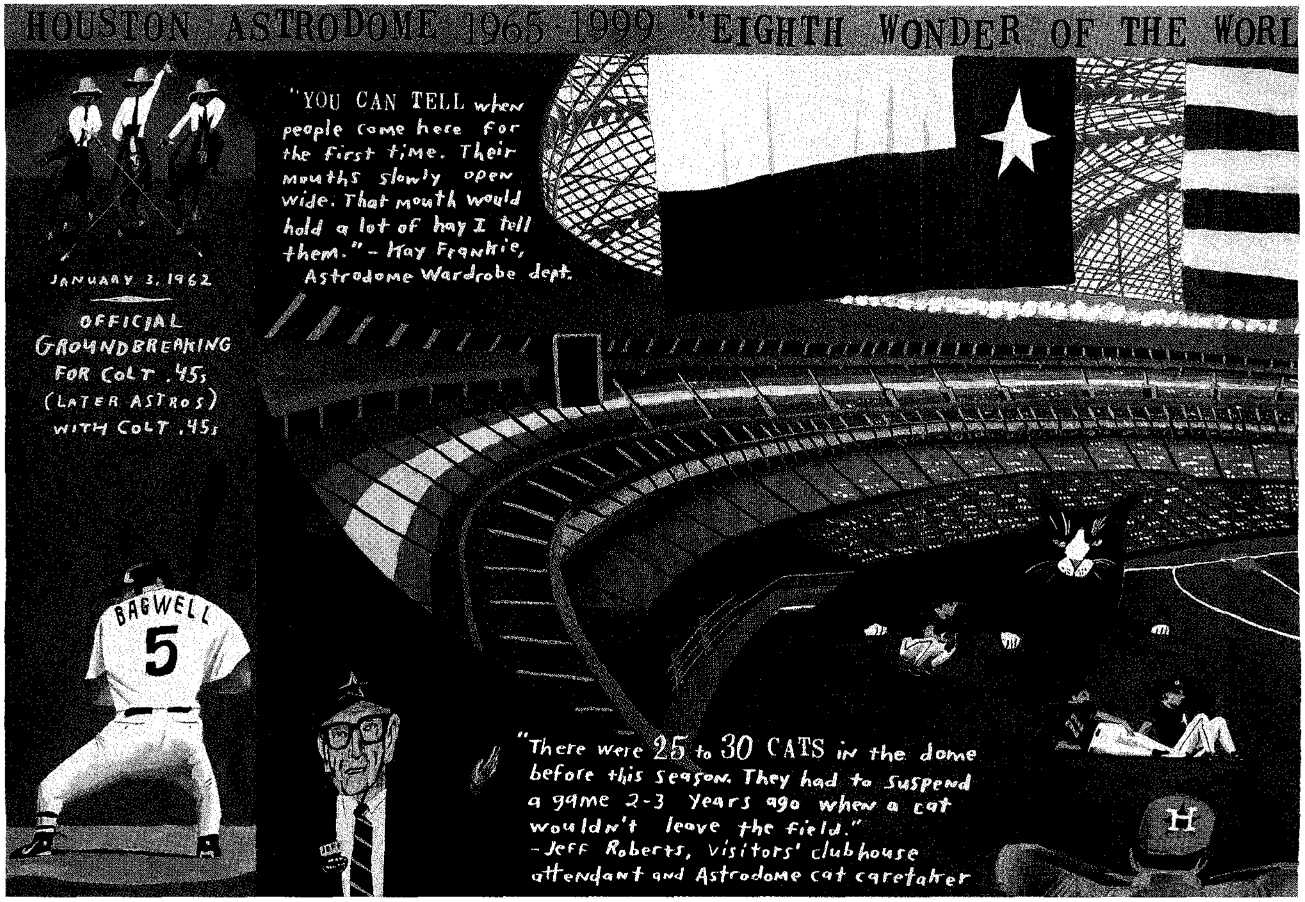

PRETTY. SMART.
FE
ONTO
7
Coca-Cola
365
Budweiser
Budw er
400

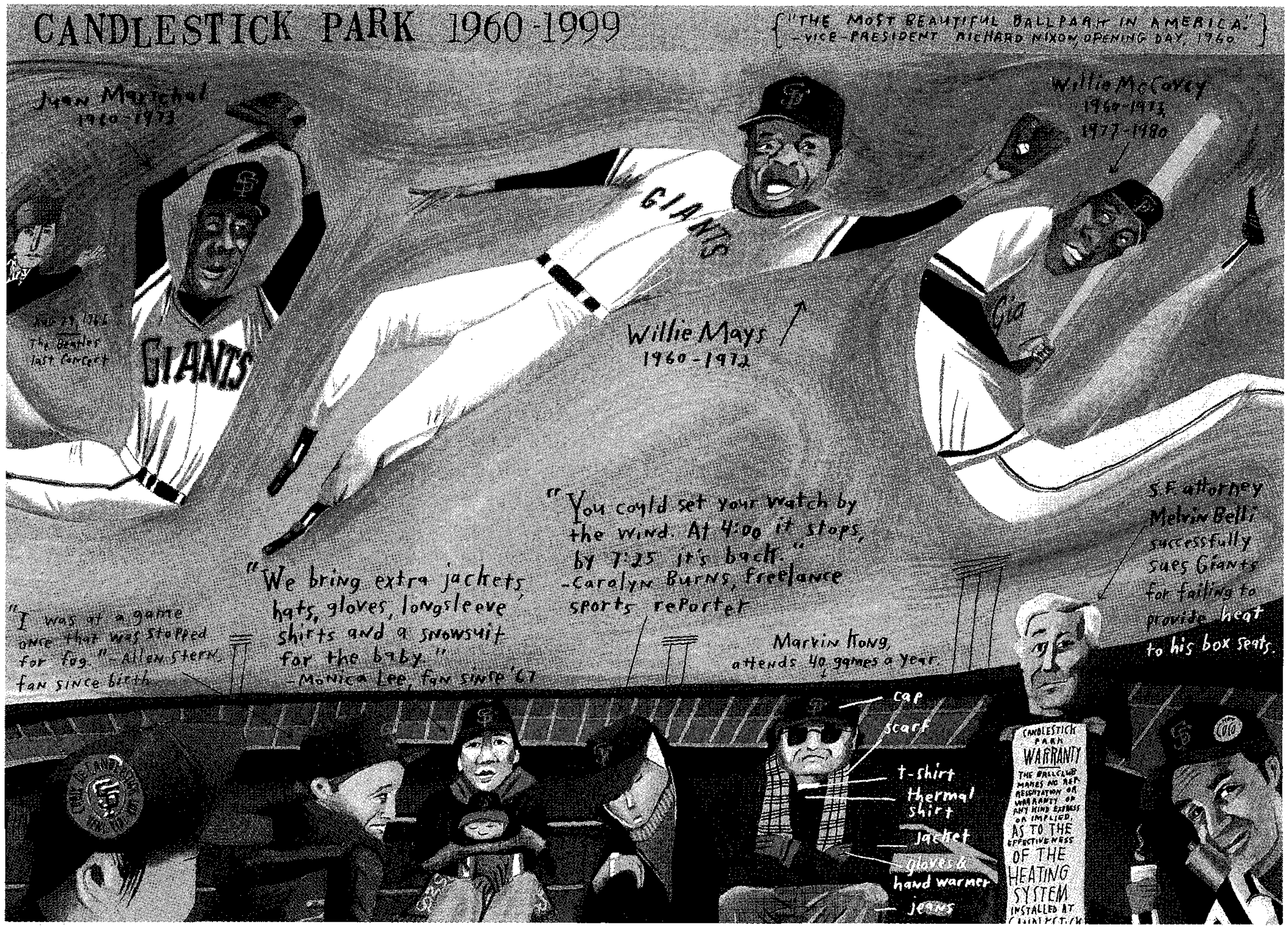
T HAS BEEN THE HOME OF THE DETROIT TIGERS FROM THEIR STA

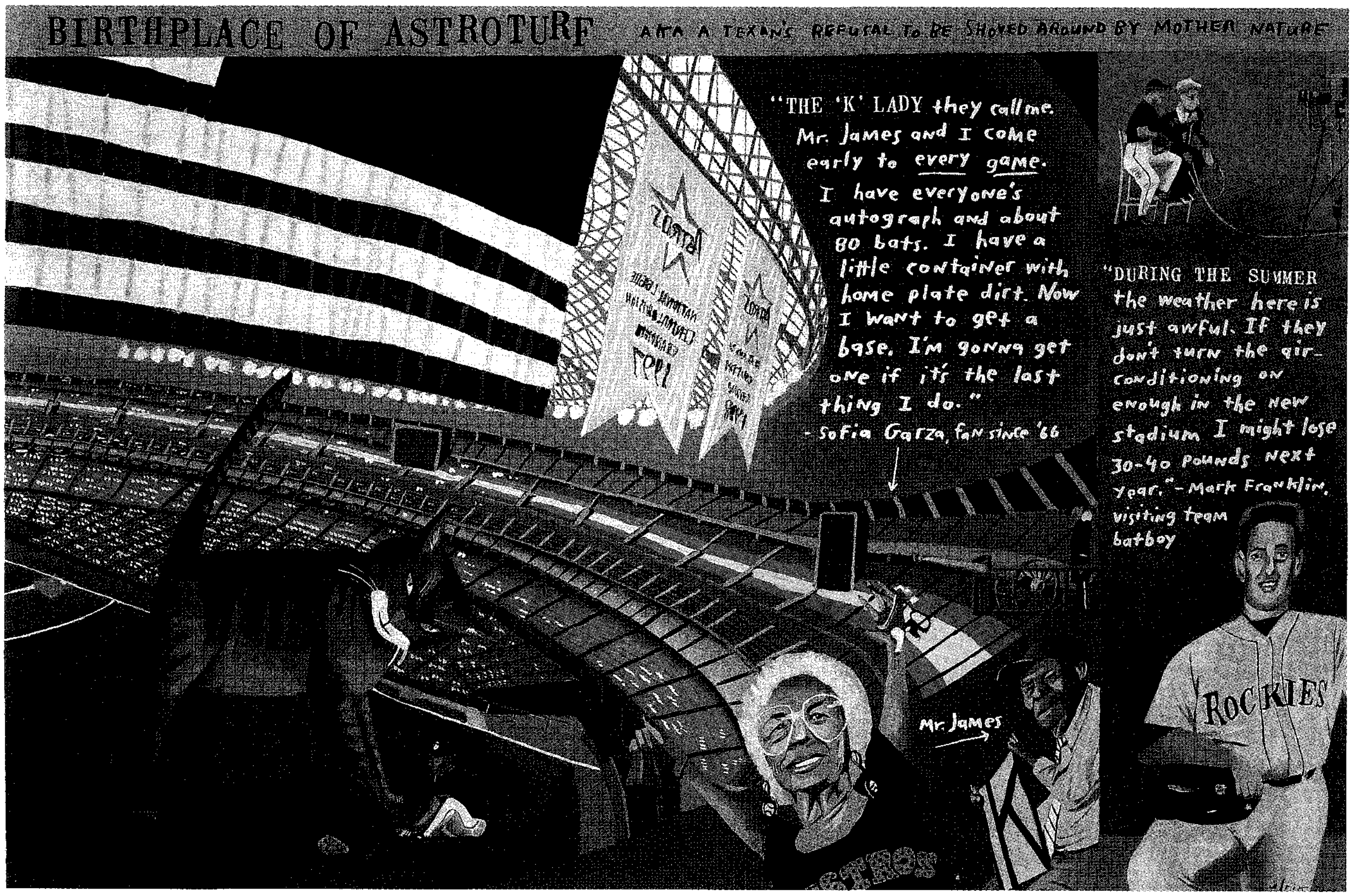
SEATTLE KINGDOME 1977-1999


"THE AMBIENCE HERE is zip. The dome's ugly from the outside. It's ugly from the inside. The freeways are gonna stop when they implode it. Personally, I'm renting a room nearby to see the implosion." – John Cook, longtime fan
GRIFFEY
24

HOUSTON ASTRODOME 1965-1999 "EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORL


JANUARY 3, 1962
OFFICIAL GROUNDBREAKING FOR COLT .45s (LATER ASTROS) WITH COLT .45s
"YOU CAN TELL when people come here for the first time. Their mouths slowly open wide. That mouth would hold a lot of hay I tell them." – Kay Frankie, Astrodome Wardrobe dept.
BAGWELL
5
"There were 25 to 30 CATS in the dome before this season. They had to suspend a game 2-3 years ago when a cat wouldn't leave the field."
– Jeff Roberts, visitors' clubhouse attendant and Astrodome cat caretaker
H


CANDLESTICK PARK 1960-1999
"THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BALLPARK IN AMERICA." —VICE-PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON, OPENING DAY, 1960
Juan Marichal 1960-1973
Aug 29, 1966 The Beatles last concert
GIANTS
Willie Mays 1960-1972
GIANTS
Willie McCovey 1960-1973, 1977-1980
"I was at a game once that was stopped for fog." —Allen Stern, fan since birth
"We bring extra jackets, hats, gloves, longsleeve shirts and a snowsuit for the baby." —Monica Lee, fan since '67
"You could set your watch by the wind. At 4:00 it stops, by 7:25 it's back." —Carolyn Burns, freelance sports reporter
Marvin Kong, attends 40 games a year.
cap
scarf
t-shirt
thermal shirt
jacket
gloves & hand warmer
jeans
S.F. attorney Melvin Belli successfully sues Giants for failing to provide heat to his box seats.
CANDLESTICK PARK WARRANTY THE BALLCLUB MAKES NO REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY OF ANY KIND EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, AS TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HEATING SYSTEM INSTALLED AT CANDLESTICK

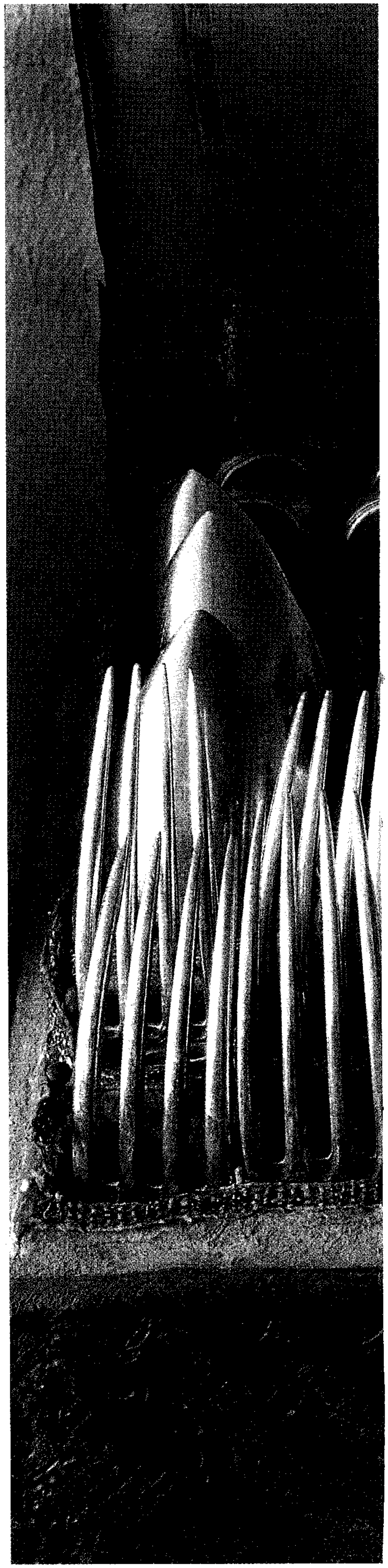

BIRTHPLACE OF ASTROTURF
AKA A TEXAN'S REFUSAL TO BE SHOVED AROUND BY MOTHER NATURE
"THE 'K' LADY they call me. Mr. James and I come early to every game. I have everyone's autograph and about 80 bats. I have a little container with home plate dirt. Now I want to get a base. I'm gonna get one if it's the last thing I do." - Sofia Garza, fan since '66
"DURING THE SUMMER the weather here is just awful. If they don't turn the air-conditioning on enough in the new stadium I might lose 30-40 pounds next year." - Mark Franklin, visiting team batboy
Mr. James
ROCKIES
ASTROS

FICTION

THE FOURTH PRUSSIAN DYNASTY

An era of romance and royalty.

BY KAREN E. BENDER



ELLA believed that she had begun the journey toward her husband, Lou, long before she met him, when she took a salesmanship class at George Washington High School. Seventeen girls and three boys were enrolled in the course. They were all immigrants or the children of immigrants, and they were all sixteen years old. On the first day of school, the teacher, Mr. Reilly, asked them to come back the following morning in their best clothes—or, rather, their best selling clothes—so that he could examine them. He was going to tell them if they had the skills to become salespeople; he was going to tell them who they were.

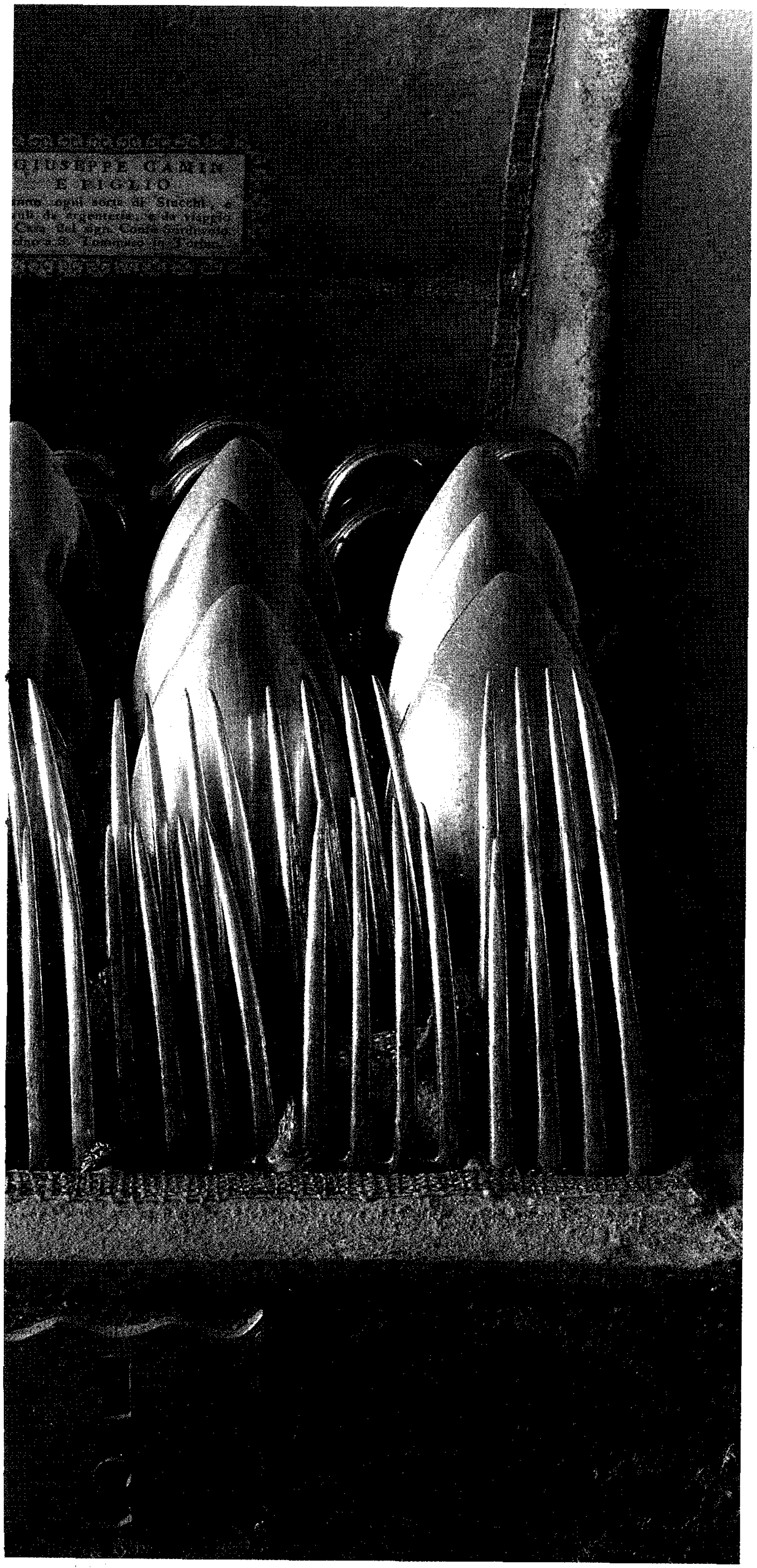
Ella had grown up in Dorchester, in a four-room tenement apartment, with five other people: her parents and her three older sisters. The ceiling was tin, and the air in the rooms seemed always to be the color of dusk. The hallway smelled of unclean breath and sour urine from the toilet they shared with their neighbors. The apartment itself couldn't contain the relentless sound of six personalities trying to assert themselves in a small space, and Ella was never sure how to make her own voice distinct.

Ella was the only one of the sisters who had been born in America. Her father had emigrated from Russia alone, and it had taken him six years to make enough money to bring the others over to Boston. She was the product of her parents' reunion. At the dinner table, she sometimes went hungry, because in Russia her sisters had learned early how to grab. Sometimes she suspected that they secretly wanted to starve her. They were big, anxious girls with thick accents, and they seemed less like sisters than a force of weather.

What had her parents been like before their lives here? The rest of the family knew this history, and thus inhabited a world of feelings that was forever denied to her. It was hard to believe that her parents could have been different from who they were now. Her mother was shy and tousled and smelled of boiled meat. She poured herself so completely into her tasks that, at times, she seemed to disappear. Ella's father was too tall for the apartment and was often restless, eager to get away. Sometimes she came upon her parents in a kiss that looked stronger than love; in its rage it reached toward an innocence. It was only in such moments that they really seemed married.

From the time she was young, Ella had wanted to be loved, and she needed that love to be immense, ferocious. After her sisters married and moved away, she often sat alone in the bedroom she had shared with them, wondering whom she would love. And who would love her? The streets outside her window at night were empty, silvered by the moon. She longed to be able to walk down them joined wholly with someone else.

A job led you to the man you would marry, but in 1920 only a few jobs were available to unmarried girls in Boston. Ella watched her sisters to see what they chose. Their jobs shaped them in basic ways. Every day, Esther, the oldest, limped home after ten hours of shouldering huge plates of food at Bloom's Kosher Restaurant, barely able to make it up the stairs. She got married first, to one of her customers, a large, moonfaced man who frequently ordered omelettes; they met when he let her sit in his booth to rest her feet. Ruth worked the graveyard operator shift at New England Telephone and turned into a pale, ghostly person who rarely spoke. She married late, in part because she spent her time packed in a room with fifty other female



operators, and few people bothered to flirt with a voice on the telephone.

Deborah had the best job. She worked at the women's hat counter in Filene's, where there were silver mirrors at the jewelry counters and the aisles were sweet with fragrance. Ella felt as though she knew a famous person—her sister, Filene's hat girl—and she enjoyed watching Deborah smoothly tell a well-dressed woman, someone who would not even nod to her on the street, "I *know* this hat would be perfect for you."

ON the second day of Salesmanship, Mr. Reilly moved around the classroom, examining the students as they stood by their desks in their best clothes. He told them that not only had he been born in this country but his parents had been, too—and he, therefore, knew what was what. "Look at this jacket," he said to Jacob Katzman. "It's *red.* You look like a clown. From a circus. Do you want the world to laugh at you? Do you want a red nose to go with it?" Trish O'Donnell, a slight girl, stood shivering in a mealy black sweater. "You," he said, "are a scaredy-cat. Why would anyone want to buy anything from you?" To Rosie Delano, done up in wrinkly, baby-pink chiffon, he said, "You think you're a princess? You're coming out of the castle for us?"

Mr. Reilly complimented only three students, and not on what they were wearing. He praised John Delaney for his impressive height—six feet one—"like an oak tree." He approved of Pearl Johnson's melodious voice and told her to say "Pleasure to meet you" several times; and then he admired Ella's smile. "Look at this," he said, turning her head, like a doll's, for the other students to see. "Is this a smile you would buy a hat from? A dress? A vase?" He paused and answered, "Yes!"

He gave them rules, and Ella wrote down every one. When a woman walks into the store, watch her closely to see which piece of her clothing she wears most proudly, then compliment it. Make sure your hands are perfectly clean. Nod one full second after someone asks you a question, not before. When a customer walks in, count to ten before you say, "May I help you?"

The students practiced looking into each other's eyes with confidence. "Pretend you see a flower inside your cus-

LINDA BUTLER, "SILVERWARE, GENOVA"

tomer's head," Mr. Reilly said. Face to face with her classmate Pearl, Ella tried to find roses, lilies, marigolds blooming behind her nervous eyes.

"This time, look *interested*," said Mr. Reilly. "The flower is shrinking. Keep watching it until it goes away." Rosie Delano was better at looking interested than anyone, but John Delaney had the most confident look. When the others asked him what flower he saw, he answered, "A very big, blue rose."

"There's no such flower as a blue rose!" they shouted, and he shrugged.

"That's what I saw," he said.

During the semester, they had to sell numerous absurd items that Mr. Reilly brought into class: an ugly rag doll, a satin shoe without a heel, a cracked marble, a banana peel. At first, almost everyone stuttered and spoke in a wispy voice. Mr. Reilly stood at the back of the room and yelled, "What? I can't hear you! Americans speak loud." He pounded his chest. "Loud! Are you an American? Or do you want to go back?"

Some of the items were impossible to sell. It took three students to get rid of the banana peel. (By that time, it had dried up.) Of course, no one actually bought anything, but Mr. Reilly knew when a customer was ready to buy. It was a specific moment, and Ella learned to detect a subtle change in the room, a longing that hadn't been there. When Anna Stragowski held up the black banana peel and said, "You *need* this. You must buy. Why? Because it is a duster!" and then whirled around the room, whisking the stiff peel against desks and windows, the students were quiet with amazement, breathing softly: there really *was* one more thing that they could want.

Mr. Reilly was hard on Ella for the whole term. She did not live up to the unintended promise of that first smile. So she wanted to do well when he handed her the final object to sell—a tiny, broken child's tooth. Ella cupped it in her hand. She could not think of what to say.

"Hello," she whispered. "I am Ella and I have something—"

"Louder!" Mr. Reilly yelled. "Who's talking? I can't hear you!"

"I am Ella— "

Mr. Reilly was shaking his head. She felt as though she were yelling, too.

"Do you have trouble chewing?" she asked. "This is what you need!"

THE SÉANCE, PARIS, 1972

A room illuminated by the rays of black crystals
arranged in a perfect circle on the lacquered table.
Beside them a checkered cloth with talismans
we can move from square to square
while behind the curtain an invisible woman,
plucking a single note on a Japanese harp,
divines the future.
In the corner, the wick of a red candle flames to life.
A clock strikes six o'clock.
And none of us sitting around this table—
itself a revolving circle within the square room—
know if it's morning or evening.
To which someone remarks, Why should it matter?
And all the while the moon is rising full
between the thin buildings,
its mountains and seas icily clear,
easily mapped—unlike the landscapes
we're roaming in our heads,
the vast, inked-in expanses
where everything is possible and nothing changes.

—Nicholas Christopher

The field of faces blinked and yawned. A few students laughed. "With this extra tooth you can have a better smile!"

"They already have teeth," Mr. Reilly said. Ella's panic was rising. She popped the tooth in her mouth and swallowed it. She and the other students stared at each other, stunned.

"Where'd it go?"

"She ate it!"

Ella put her hand on her stomach. She had swallowed a stranger's tooth. Whose mouth had it come from? Why had she swallowed it? Would it harm her insides? Would Mr. Reilly want it back?

Mr. Reilly stood up. The class was in an uproar. "Mr. Reilly! Now we can't buy the tooth!"

"Ella, where is the tooth?" asked Mr. Reilly. Ella gently patted her stomach.

"Tell me, class. Do you want that tooth?" Mr. Reilly said.

Nineteen pairs of eyes looked at her. "Yes!" the students shouted.

"Then I have to say that you pass," Mr. Reilly said.

Ella stood in front of the class for one more moment before she sat down, feeling those rapt, hungry eyes on her. She knew that the others wanted the tooth only because it could not be had.

Ella's tooth-swallowing trick so impressed Mr. Reilly that when she graduated from high school two years later he referred her to his friend Marvin, a floorwalker at Johnson Massey Treasure Trove. It was a plum job, even more prestigious than being a hat girl at Filene's.

The Treasure Trove was situated on the fifth floor of the elegant department store. On the directory posted in each elevator, the shop was indicated by a scrolled gold plaque. The moment Ella walked into the Treasure Trove, she knew that she did not belong. It was full of the things she imagined finding only in rich people's homes—vases and lamps and china figurines. The door was flanked by two black Grecian columns, and inside were jade dogs and horses and rabbits and domed chests encrusted with purple stones. There were gentlemen customers with bowlers and ladies in silk dresses and feathered hats. Above, a teardrop chandelier sparkled like frozen raindrops. Ella kept her hands out of her pockets to show everyone that she was not a thief.

"Reilly sent you?" asked Marvin. He

had a strange accent, almost English. His face was thin, with fine cheekbones that made him appear sophisticated. Ella nodded.

"Let's get a look at you," he said.

She turned around, arms held out, and tried to smile. He looked her over. "What do you think of all this?" he asked her, gesturing at the room.

"It's beautiful," she said. Her voice was thick with feeling.

"Fine," he said. His accent slid a little. "We'll fit you up in a uniform. Be here tomorrow at nine."

And, that quickly, Marvin had hired her. She came in every morning and dusted off the figures made of jade or ivory or gold. She wore a uniform, a forest-green cap-sleeved blouse with a calf-length skirt. On her collar, she had a sparkling rhinestone lapel pin with the initials "JM," for Johnson Massey. Ella did not think that the pin's jewels were real, but she also did not want anyone to tell her they weren't.

She memorized everything Marvin told her about the objects; the information seemed culled from an encyclopedia. "Jade is much prized in the Orient. Different methods for carving it are used in China and Japan." Sometimes, when she was tired, she made up her own facts. "This fine chest stored dishes in the castle of King Howard the Fourth," she said. She loved how the customers nodded as they listened, vulnerable with fragile objects in their careful hands.

ELLA and Lou had met when Lou wandered into the Treasure Trove by chance. She came up behind him and asked, "May I help you?" Lou turned around and saw her. He lowered his hat.

"I'm just a salesgirl," she said. "You can put your hat—"

"You're Ella," he said, reading her name tag. "A pleasure to meet you. I'm Lou." He gazed at her. "I'm searching for a gift from"—he looked around—"the Fourth Prussian Dynasty," he announced.

"Yes," she said.

"From 1834 to 1857. A great era in history. A time of riches. Beautiful queens." His voice echoed strangely. She could not recall anything about the Fourth Prussian Dynasty.

"Ella," he said. "Show me what you have."

They strolled past the delicate, glimmering objects. There were no other customers or salesgirls in the store just then. He followed her, his shoulders hunched, assuming a protective posture.

"Prussia," she said, hoping for more help from him.

"I'd say the year 1852," he said.

She gazed around the room. A feeling of boldness came over her. "This!" she tried, pointing to a gold-filigree grandfather clock. "This is from that time."

He went up to the clock, rapped it with his knuckles. His face went soft with approval. "It is," he said.

Ella stepped back, surprised. The clock was certainly not from the Fourth Prussian Dynasty, whatever that was.

Each understood that the other was lying. The light in the room seemed to brighten.

"It chimed to call them to dinner," he said.

"I think so," she said, smiling. A puff of glee burst in her chest.

They walked around the room. Al-

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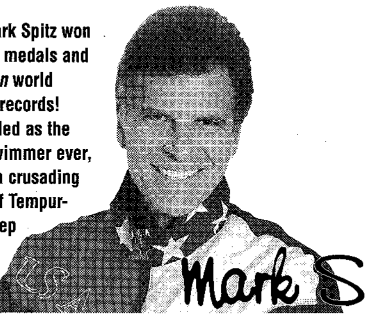

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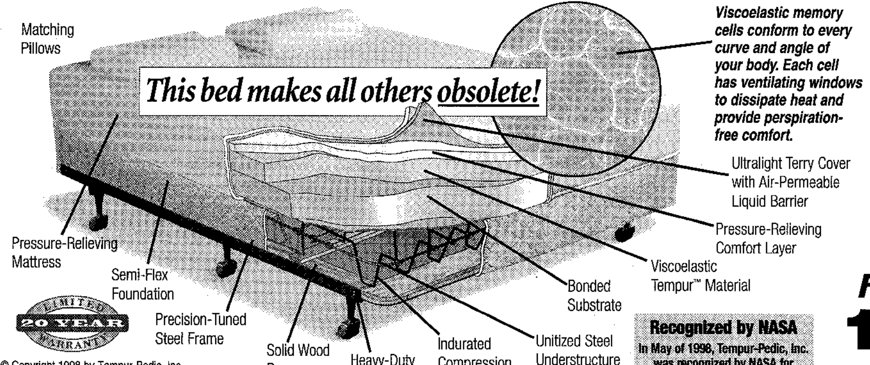
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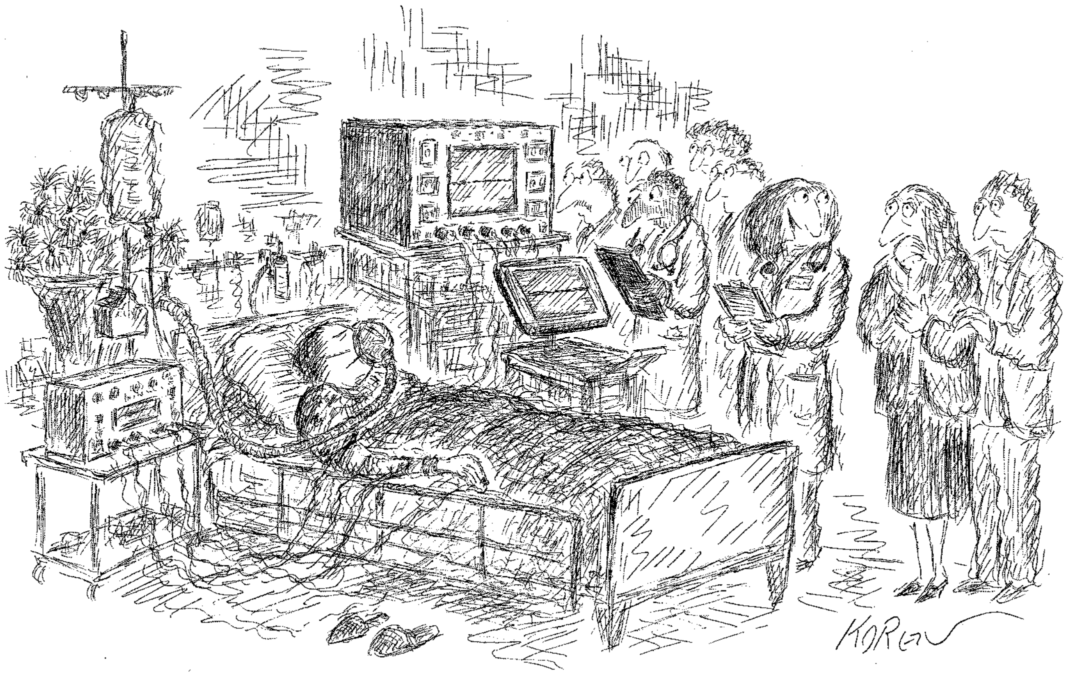

"We're hoping for an uptick."

• •

most all the objects in it, they decided, must be from the Fourth Prussian Dynasty. "This," Lou said, gripping a vase dangerously by its neck, "held the bracelets that belonged to Edwina, the Prussian princess."

"No," she said. "That was for her earrings. Her bracelets"—she tapped a long, curved ivory tusk—"hung on this."

Ella began to feel a little dizzy. Lou walked close to her, so close that it was as if they were already intimate, and when she took her place behind the counter again he looked lost. He bought the least expensive item in the room—a tiny jade rabbit—and seemed stunned that he had purchased anything.

"Thank you very much, Ella," he said in a puzzled way, clutching the store bag. "Thank you for helping me today." And then, as though afraid of what he might say next, he dashed out of the store.

A FEW days later, as she came out through the glass doors of Johnson Massey, she saw Lou standing by the store windows. He was moving his hat restlessly from hand to hand; when he saw her, he quickly put it on. "Ella," he said, his face stern, "I'm Lou."

It was a fall day, and the sky was pale with cold. His hands seemed clumsy and large in brown mittens. His breath curled in the chill air. "What a lovely pin," he said, looking at the sparkling "JM" on her lapel.

"I think they're diamonds," she said, and then stopped, embarrassed.

He smiled, so that she knew that he knew the stones could not be diamonds. They began walking together, toward nowhere. The afternoon seemed to part before them.

"If you're still looking for presents," she said, knowing he wasn't, "Sophie can help—"

"I have something for you," he blurted. They stopped. He held out a package, badly wrapped. It was easy to accept the present; she was curious. She unwound the tissue. It was the rabbit she had sold him.

"There was no Fourth Prussian Dynasty," she said. She had looked it up in an encyclopedia.

"No?" He laughed. He knew. His face was as open as a child's. "But you were so . . . helpful. I wanted to give it to you."

She touched the rabbit's glossy ears. She had never owned anything from the Treasure Trove.

"Have dinner with me," he said. The words seemed to come from a tender place inside him. He stepped back a little. There was a brisk gust of wind, and his coat flapped around him.

ELLA began to look forward to seeing Lou come through the Grecian columns of the Treasure Trove. Soon he was visiting her several times a week. She was cautious, but she liked him, partly because the other girls did. They hovered beside him, laughing at his jokes, the way he made fun of the gaudiest, most grotesque objects. "What fool would buy this?" he said, lifting a huge gilt ashtray with cupids balancing on the edges. The girls shrieked with laughter. Ella watched them change lipsticks, looking for the one color that would make him love them. They acted like men when they flirted, slapping him playfully, calling him "mister" or "kid," as though this gave them new rights to him. They smiled coldly at Ella. She did not understand her claim on Lou, but she tried to love him almost to appease them.

After work, Ella and Lou took walks together. He was full of opinions, and he seemed so happy to be with her that she wanted to listen. He told her about the classes he had taken in college; how he helped manage his mother's suit store; how he had read about California and wanted to live in a place that was always warm. Lou was full of jokes when he visited the store, but when they were alone he had an earnest quality that told her that he took her seriously. His admiration seemed to be part of him, like bone.

He had money. That gave him confidence; he entered restaurants, stores with none of her trepidation. She began to love the careful, greased slickness of his hair, which gleamed like black licorice, and the way he shook his coat on, commanding and sharp. He was educated; he read all the sections of a newspaper. He walked through the world knowing he belonged in it.

One night, she was eating dinner with Lou in a bright-red booth in a diner in Brookline. She sat, anxious, straightening the fork on her napkin. She had

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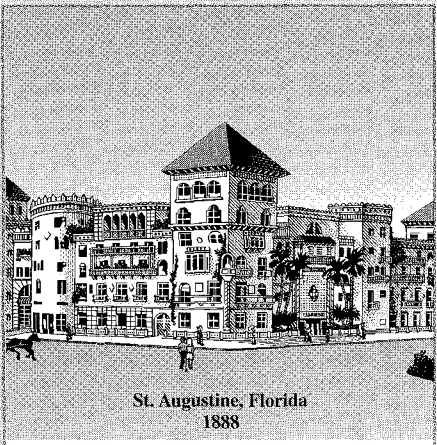

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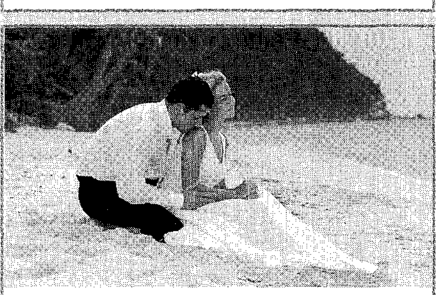

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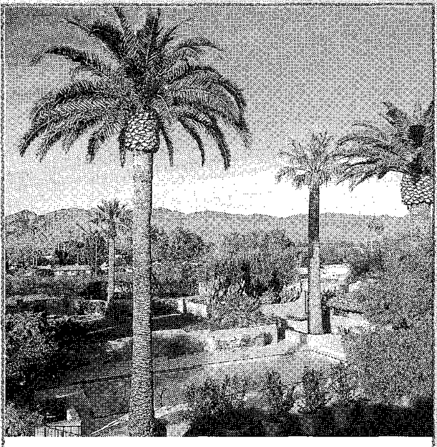

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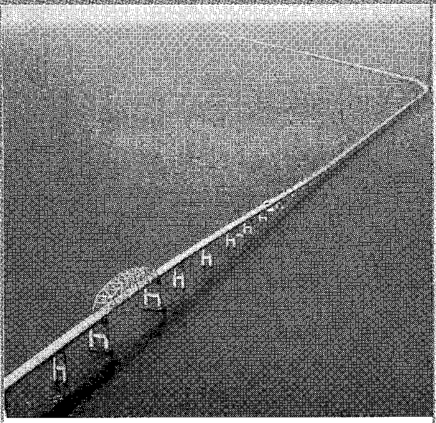

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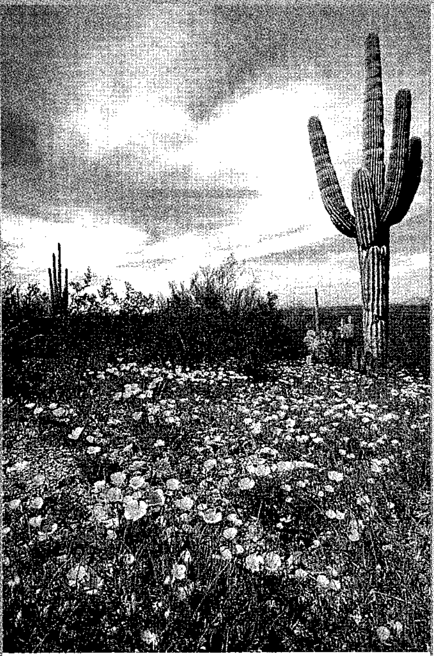

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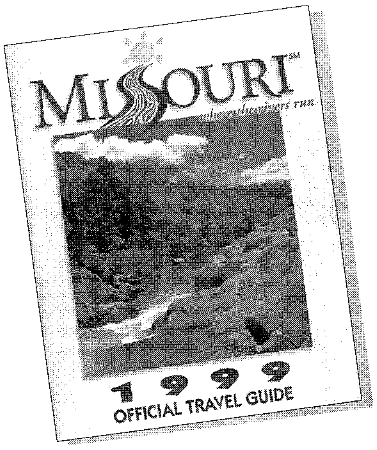

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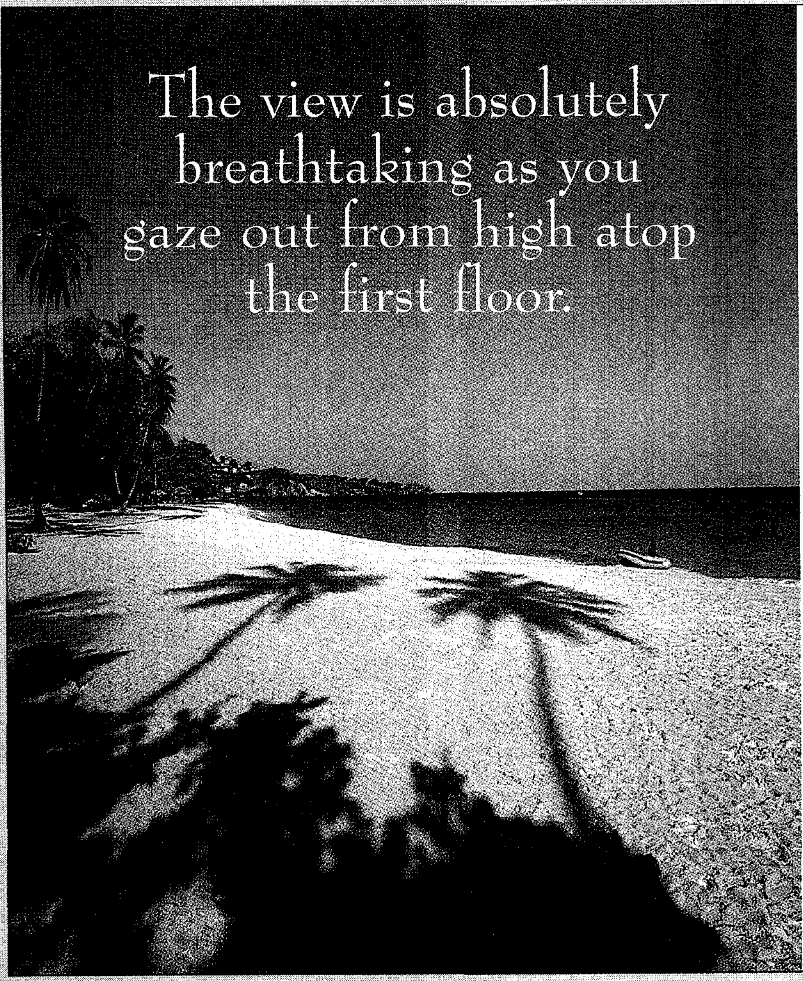
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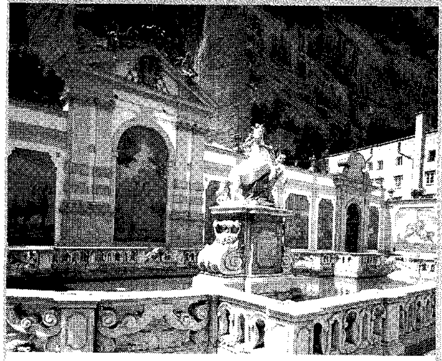

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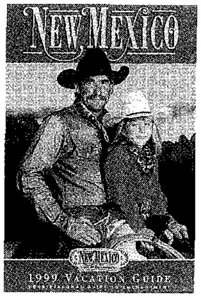

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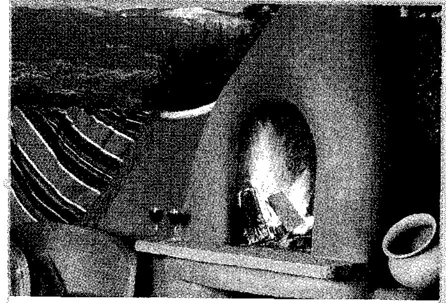

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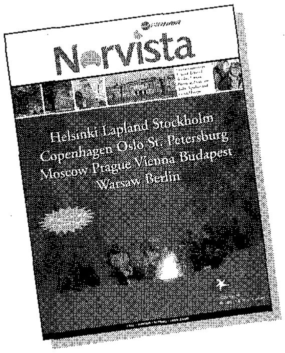
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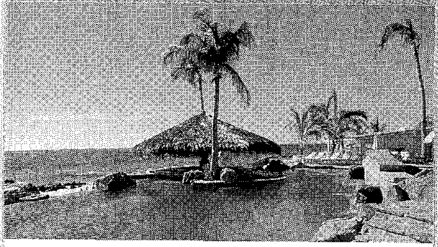

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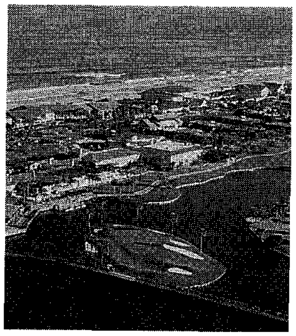

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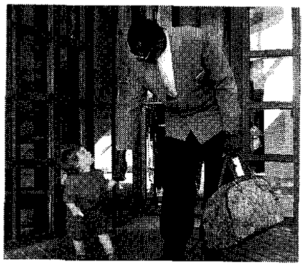

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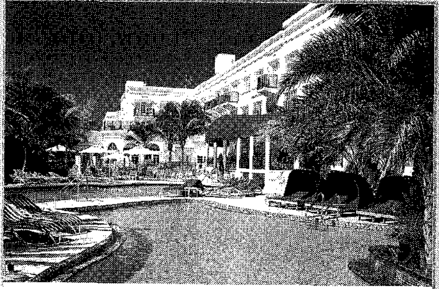

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ordered brisket, but it wasn't a fancy place and when her meal arrived the meat was too tough to cut. Her knife skidded from her hand to the floor.

"They should take it back," Lou said. "It should be more tender." Ella felt embarrassed, responsible somehow.

"No, I like it this way," she said. He looked at her.

"Then let me try," he said.

Lou slid her plate over to his side, pressed his fork deeply into the meat, and carefully cut off a small piece. He held it up as though it were a jewel.

"How's this?" he asked.

She stared at him. "Fine," she said.

He cut the meat into bite-sized pieces for her. Then he set the plate back in front of her. "That should be better," he said.

She could not look at him. It was wonderful, the way he cut her meat for her. Lou chewed his green beans. For a moment, Ella stopped eating her brisket. She was so certain of her future, she did not feel she needed to do anything—pick up her fork, drink her water. An odd happiness filled her. Life would carry her to the next good place.

THE wedding was a rush of images: the rabbi's gray, acne-marked face, her boned, ivory-satin dress, paid for by Lou's family, and the juicy red roast beef they had also provided. At one point, she was held up in a slight wooden chair, dozens of hands reaching for her, as though she were floating on a wild sea. She barely saw Lou during the party, until, emerging from a flurry of rice, they disappeared into a taxi that took them to the Hotel Essex. Lou registered them as Mr. and Mrs. Lou Rose. It was that easy; this was who she was.

She had never been inside a hotel. Their room was creamy-walled, with a ruby-red carpet. There were dark-blue linen drapes, and a big, tidy bed. A bottle of champagne sat in a silver bucket. The room smelled clean, antiseptic. Ella wanted to touch everything. She moved around, examining the night table, opening and closing the drawers.

Lou followed her. "Let me introduce my wife to the dresser," he said. His voice was hoarse. "Let me introduce my wife to the lamp—"

The word "wife" startled her, as if an intruder had entered the room. In the bathroom she found fragrant squares of soap, and picked one up. "It's our first soap," she said to Lou. "Hold out your hands." He did; his palms were exquisite and pale pink. Gently she washed their hands together. He dried his with the plush hotel towel. They went back into the bedroom, and Lou leaned toward her face and kissed her.

It was all very fast. She wanted to be a good bride, to be still as Lou unzipped her dress and pushed it down her shoulders, but she also wanted to kiss back. She stepped out of her dress in one quick, determined motion. He unhooked her bra and took her breasts in his hands. It was an astounding sight, her breasts, pale and soft, in his hands. It seemed too easy, too calm.

Lou gently guided her down to the bed. The gold bands on their fingers gleamed, ghostly in the darkness, as though they belonged to the same club. His fingers had a rubbery quality, and she felt the edge of his fingernail inside her. There was a loneliness that she had not expected. "Ella," he whispered. Suddenly frightened, she wrapped her arms around him; she was aware of the cotton sheet and the clock ticking on the wall and his breath, so fast, doglike. She pressed her forehead into his shoulder, wanting to touch more than his body.

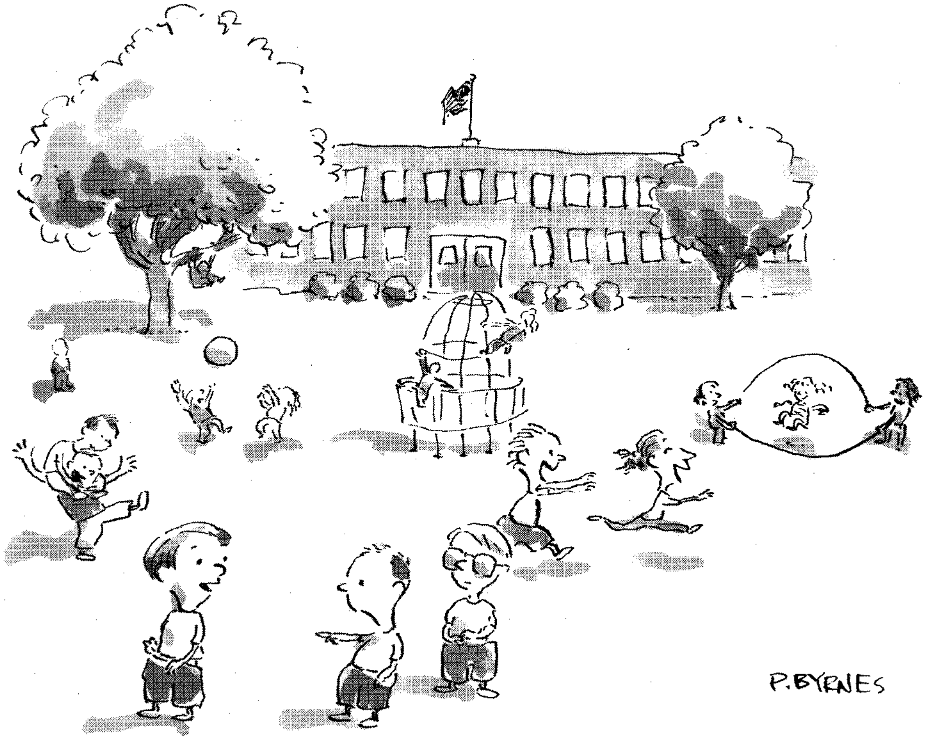
Then he stopped, and rolled off her, pushing his face into a pillow. His ear was so close to her lips she wanted to shout into it, but she did not know what she would say.

"Well, my love," Lou said. "We're married."

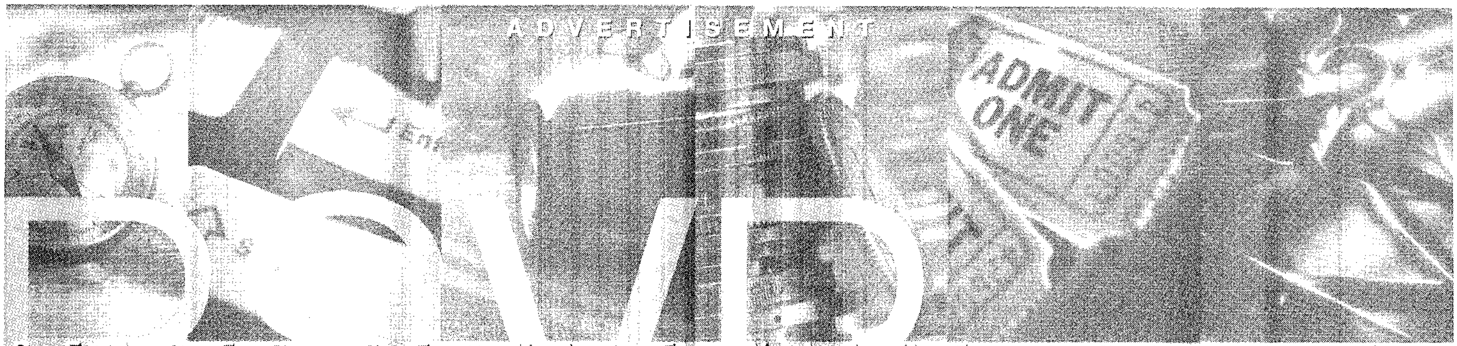
They blinked into the brackish, honeyed smell of each other's breath.

Lou fell asleep, and Ella watched him as he slept. Suddenly, she understood that no one completely owned anyone else in the world. Even together in their wedding bed, they would separate into two different people in their dreams. As her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she saw her wedding dress, stiff and opalescent in the deep-blue light. It looked as if it had fallen and were trying, very delicately, to stand up.

It took nothing to send them to California: a cramped attic apartment; a newspaper article that said homes in Los Angeles were cheap. It was 1924. They moved West, a new bride and groom, in a used Ford. Gripping hands, Ella and Lou watched as each state fell away behind them, revealing the vast country, alternately brown or verdant beneath the springtime sun. ♦



"Yes, the underpants sighting is very interesting, but I'm really more intrigued by your observations of London and France."



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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

BUFFALOED

Was the Native American always nature's friend?

BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

For more than a century, spiritually undernourished Americans of European descent have been looking longingly at Native American culture and discovering in it an implicit—and distinctly environmentalist—critique of their own civilization. The critique boils down to this: Indians respect the earth and all its creatures and live in harmony with them, and white people don't. Probably the best pop-culture example of this attitude was Kevin Costner's movie "Dances with Wolves," but anybody who has children in elementary school will have encountered it without having had to ingest a media version. The romantic view of Indians as naturalists has grown-up intellectual adherents, too. "The Way of the Human Being" (Yale; $27.50), by Calvin Luther Martin, a historian who has left his academic post at Rutgers and moved to the Adirondacks, is suffused with it. Martin tells us that the Western mind has a "severed intellect"—one that is "detached from deep participation with the earth." By contrast, "The remarkable courtesy rendered plants and animals by nonfarming, nonpastoral small-band societies revealed an approach to these beings that was profoundly different from the one my agricultural forefathers conjured up."

In "The Ecological Indian: Myth and History" (Norton; $27.95), Shepard Krech III, a professor of anthropology at Brown, whose writing persona is that of a cautious, unbiased evidence examiner, sets out to—well, he'd say to evaluate the notion of an authentic Indian tradition that prefigures contemporary environmentalism. But demolish it would be more like it.

Krech's book is a series of summaries of the academic debates about how environmentally aware the Indians were, and much of its appeal lies in its delimited peek into historical and anthropological fracases that are fascinating in a small dose but would quickly become dreary if you had to spend your life trapped inside them. For example, in 1967 a "palynologist and geochronogist" named Paul Martin wrote an article accusing Indians of the Pleistocene era of having waged a Nazi-style "blitzkrieg" on large animals in the American West, which caused the extinction not only of species we've all heard of, like the woolly mammoth and the mastodon, but also, to quote Krech, of such creatures as "single-hump camels, stocky six-foot-long capybaras, five-hundred-pound tapirs, three-hundred-pound giant beavers, four-horned antelopes . . . bison-sized shrub oxen, and stag moose with fantastic multiple-palmated and tined antlers." Over the years, Martin's critics have come back with the theory that these species were killed off by asteroid showers and climate changes, not by Indians. Krech reviews the historical record, which is a tricky matter: for Martin's theory to be correct, the Pleistocene climate would have to have been cold enough to generate glaciation, causing the oceans to fall to the point where Indians could walk across the Bering Strait to get to their animal prey, but not so cold that it killed off the animals before the Indians could. Krech concludes, judiciously, that "it is safest not to rule out a role for Native Americans altogether."

Then there's the opposite Nazi-analogizing argument, made by David Stannard in his 1992 book, "American Holocaust," that many millions of Indians were indirectly killed by Europeans through their destruction of the habitat and their introduction of new and deadly diseases to which Indians had no immunity. Here everything depends on the size of the Indian population in North America before Europeans arrived—whether it was as big as eighteen million, a number Stannard adopted from the work of an anthropologist named Henry Dobyns, or something closer to what Dobyns's critics believe to be two million. (If those critics are correct, it means that there are almost no missing people to account for: according to the first reliable estimates, there were still two million inhabitants in North America in 1700, and the Dobyns school believes that the bulk of the Indian casualties from European-borne diseases occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.) Again, Krech painstakingly guides us through specific proved incidents of sudden mass death by disease, mostly smallpox and measles, each grislier than the last, and finally rules that the aboriginal population was between four and seven million, which means that the Indian death toll was much lower than Stannard and Dobyns would have it. And Krech dismisses the idea that Europeans intentionally infected Indians.

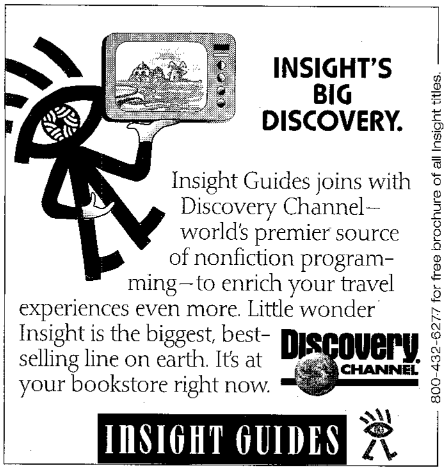
He also points out that some reduction of the Indian population is probably attributable to Indian customs that had nothing to do with Europeans, such as female infanticide ("which had been widely practiced"), and to the exhaustion or the mismanagement of resources. Across the continent, Indians cleared forests by various means, among them setting fires, in order to grow crops or to create propitious conditions for hunting. If the fires went out of control, or if tribes simply used up the soil, wood, and game that supported them, they moved on, leaving the land barren. At other times, tribes apparently rendered what were meant to be permanent settlements uninhabitable. The Hohokam of central Arizona built up an amazingly extensive and sophisticated system of irrigation

Ralph Steadman 99

Hunting practices appear to be at the heart of the debate over the Indians' environmental awareness.

canals over a period of a thousand years, then disappeared in the fifteenth century. The best-known student of their civilization, an archeologist named Emil Haury, has declared them to have engineered a "nearly perfect adaptation to a desert homeland," but Krech isn't so sure. He believes that they may have unwittingly done themselves in by using up too much wood and by irrigating the soil with river water that was so salty—the Hohokam lived along the aptly named Salt River—that it gradually became impossible for crops to grow.

Close to half of "The Ecological Indian" is devoted to a discussion of hunting practices. Calvin Luther Martin, with his unshakable faith in Indian superiority, praises these practices in his brief for Indian ecological awareness: hunter-gatherer societies never began "systematically enslaving plants and animals" and turning them into "dumb brutes and inert vegetables." Indians, Martin says, saw themselves and their prey as possessing equal moral standing, and the act of killing for food as being encased in an ethic of spiritual reverence. Krech, in turn, presents us—always in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that careful tone of his—with a great, great deal of Indian animal killing, casting doubt on the idea that there was any moral code underlying it which the contemporary liberal mind would find familiar and agreeable.

If there is one example of the ecological insensitivity of whites that everyone knows, it is the vast slaughter of buffalo, which reduced the population of the animals from forty million in 1800 to nearly zero a hundred years later. Krech, startlingly, presents the Indians as having been full participants in it. They regularly hunted buffalo by driving entire herds off cliffs, a practice that left the carcasses at the bottom of the heap inaccessible and therefore wasted. They also hunted them just for such delicacies and totems as their tongues, or their fetuses, or their heads, and left the rest to rot in the sun. As a result, Krech tells us, “buffalo bones littered the prairies so thickly that in places it was impossible to walk without rattling against their skeletons.” Indians ate buffalo meat in almost absurdly copious quantities—more than five pounds a day. And buffalo weren't the only species they helped endanger. They killed so many deer that they nearly wiped them out in the South—not for purposes of sustenance or ritual but to obtain skins that they could exchange with the Europeans for guns and clothing. They were, Krech maintains, willing and enthusiastic participants in this trade, not innocents corrupted by Western commercial values. Indians in the north country killed millions of beavers to supply affluent Europeans with hats, and Krech adds that the basic principles of resource management, such as the establishment of hunting territories and limits on killing, were more likely introduced into the trade by the Hudson Bay Company than by Indians.

Is there just a hint of irony, the product of a not quite fully repressed urge to tease sentimental glorifiers of Indians, underneath Krech's earnest and scrupulously fair tone? Sometimes, as he rolls out the gruesome details, it seems that way, as in this passage quoting a white trader on the practices of the Mandan tribe, of Missouri:

> Some Indians preferred drowned buffaloes over all other types of food. McKenzie wrote, “When the skin is raised you will see the flesh of a greenish hue, and ready to become alive at the least exposure to the sun; and is so ripe, so tender, that very little boiling is required.” Bottle-green soup made from it was “reckoned delicious” and the Mandan were so fond of “putrid meat” that they buried animals all winter and ate them in spring.

But Krech is more than just a conventional-wisdom overturner; he has a serious larger point to make. It is his view that concepts like ecology, waste, preservation, and even the natural (as distinct from the human) world are entirely anachronistic when applied to Indians in the days before the European settlement of North America. The Indians' belief system was not some traditional precursor of modern environmentalism but a product of animist religion. Their treatment of plants and animals was principled, but by their lights then, not by ours now. Depletions of animal stocks were often seen as a punishment attributable to hunters' deficiencies, rather than to their too great success, the logic being that the Great Spirit would reward you for efficiently killing lots of animals by creating more of them. There were also taboos against letting any animals escape from a hunt, because that would jinx the next one. And many Indians believed in reanimation or in reincarnation, so the notion that killing animals in large numbers might lead to their extinction would have made no sense to them.

The whole idea that North America was a wilderness existing in a state of ecological balance before the European explorers arrived strikes Krech as nonsense. “North America was a manipulated continent,” he says—manipulated by Indians, who had been busily pursuing some combination of self-interest and religious belief for centuries. Krech also reminds us that the current state of scientific thinking is that “natural systems are not inherently balanced or harmonious” but instead exist in a state of “long-term disequilibrium and flux.” This was the case when the Indians were the only humans here, and even when there were no humans here at all and the animals grazed, forested, and killed on their own. America was never a natural paradise. Perhaps the most wickedly contrarian of all Krech's arguments is that when contemporary Indians say that they, as he quotes one tribal leader, “have hunted and fished, in balance with nature, for more than 300 generations” their belief is not only incorrect but represents the unconscious adaptation of a stereotype invented by whites. "At first a projection of Europeans and European-Americans," he writes, "it eventually became a self-image."

THE endless, empty, and visually spectacular West has always been mythologized with particular speed and ferocity, and not just by Indians and their admirers. At the age of twenty-six, Buffalo Bill, the frontier scout and hunter, began a second career as a professional entertainer. He performed into his old age, reënacting his youthful exploits in burnished form for paying customers, who included appreciative Westerners as well as city slickers. It isn't unimaginable that Indians, too, were profoundly influenced by—or even had their sense of themselves shaped by—the myths of the West.

The obvious criticism of Krech's book is that he accepts the reliability of accounts by Europeans—explorers, soldiers, settlers, priests, traders—of Indians' customs and behavior. Can people in whom the idea of Indians as bloodthirsty savages was so deeply ingrained be trusted? Perhaps not, but Krech is careful to confine himself to firsthand reports, excluding generalizations and value judgments, and he supports them with archeological and scientific records and with material from Indian sources. Krech will surely be accused of being anti-Indian and anti-environmentalist, but what he really seems to be is anti-anachronist. The lesson of "The Ecological Indian" is not about Indians themselves so much as it is about the depth of the human need to see history through the lens of the present, and to avoid having to justify positions on their merits by locating them in a sanctified past. ♦

SPANISH PRISONER

The perils of idolatry.

BY LEE SIEGEL

POET, playwright, composer, pianist, guitarist, draftsman, actor, director, set and costume designer, Federico García Lorca made the ceaseless hunger of desire his obsessive theme. He called it *negra pena*, "black pain," and *perro en corazón*, "dog in the heart." Here is the final stanza from his "Sleepwalker's Ballad" (in my translation):

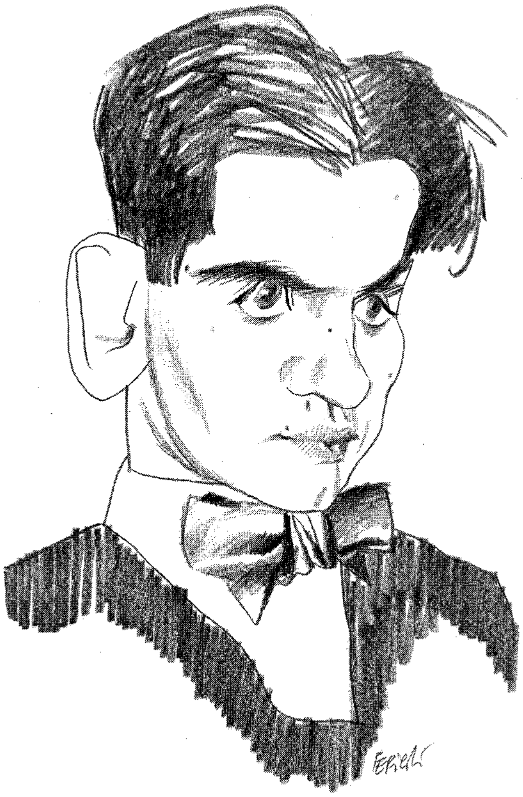
Up over the face of the well
the gypsy girl swayed and she swayed.
Green her flesh and her hair so green
and her eyes are full of cold silver.
An icy piece of light from the moon
Keeps her aloft on the water.
The night grew close and intimate
like the square of a small town.
Drunken policemen pounded on the door.
Greenly how I want you so greenly.
Green wind. Branches that are green.
The ship aloft on the sea.
And the horse on the mountain.

Lorca creates an atmosphere of impossible proportions, out of which nevertheless rises a dreamy congruity between the futility of desire and the intensity of desire. He is the celebrated master of such a mortal dissonance. And yet, for all the acknowledgment of his greatness, Lorca has always suffered a little at the hands of his admirers.

The most sober readers of Lorca's poetry and plays, it seems, cannot help having their idea of the poet distorted by the romantic image Lorca cultivated of the passionate Andalusian gypsy. And Lorca's death, at the age of thirty-eight, before a Fascist firing squad in the opening days of the Spanish Civil War, only intensified the dramatic aura around his life. One man boasted afterward that he had helped to kill Lorca, shooting "two bullets into his ass for being a queer"—an especially grotesque fate for a shrewd yet childlike man who was driven throughout his brief existence to resist imposed identities, whether political, sexual, or artistic.

Even William Carlos Williams, that lapidary anti-romantic, lost his footing when he considered Lorca. "His murder," Williams wrote, "is perhaps as he would have wished it to be: to die on the horns of the bull." It's a response that strangely resembles that of Salvador Dali, Lorca's onetime friend and intimate: "The moment I learned of his death . . . I cried 'Olé!' I thought that for Federico García Lorca, it was the most beautiful way of dying: killed by the Civil War."

Lorca himself had trouble restraining the image of Lorca. "Don't pull that Lorca business on me!" he once shouted at an actor who was imitating his operatic style of recitation. (When Frank O'Hara wrote, "I'm getting rather Lorcaesque lately / and I don't like it," he was saying pretty much the same thing.) This is why Leslie Stainton's clear-eyed new biography, "Lorca: A Dream of Life" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $35), the first in English in a decade, is so welcome, despite its limitations. Stainton's supercautious detachment can fade into remoteness, and her remoteness sometimes dissipates into appraisals of Lorca's writing so blandly general that they might apply to just about any poet at all. There isn't anything substantially new about Lorca's life here, either. Yet Stainton has told the story vividly and with real narrative drive, and has thus offered an occasion for the kind of reëvaluation of the poet which she herself does not venture.



Federico García Lorca

It's high time for a fresh consideration of Lorca, because his reputation thrives in two mythic-historical categories—one encompassing writers supposedly cursed by fate as the price of their genius (Keats, Chatterton, Rimbaud, Leopardi), and the other writers wounded and then done in by historical forces as punishment for their genius (Walter Benjamin, Osip Mandelstam, Isaac Babel, Bruno Schulz). We forgive these myths their obfuscations for different reasons: in the first case, we like to see a rough destiny redeemed by vindicating history; in the second, we like to see terrible history shamed by a vindicated destiny.

In fact, Lorca was both genuinely apolitical and sincerely enraged at the backwardness and inequality of Spanish society. The son of a wealthy landowning father and an educated, doting mother, he was emotionally connected to some prominent socialists and was voluble about his unhappiness with Spanish social arrangements—that's why the Fascists came for him—but he refused to join a political party. His murderers, though, had an exaggerated sense of his ideological commitments and martyred him. And his admirers, in their rational impulse to vilify his killers, have obscured his true achievement by exaggerating his martyrdom.

As a dramatist, Lorca is known mainly for three plays, tragedies that appear to portray the consequences of a static society's repression of sexual instincts: "Blood Wedding," "Yerma," and "The House of Bernarda Alba." As a poet, his reputation rests on two volumes of verse: the "Gypsy Ballads"—which includes the "Sleepwalker's Ballad"—and "Poet in New York." The latter he wrote during a brief stay in New York in the late twenties, when he enrolled as a student at Columbia University and lived in a Columbia dorm.

Lorca's previous biographers and now Stainton have made much of his supposed state of mind when he was in New York: lonely, depressed, alienated by the mammoth modern city, tortured by his sexuality, and suffering in particular from a disastrous love affair with a roué who had toyed with his affections and then left him for a woman. A corrosive personal anguish is certainly the dominant emotion in "Poet in New York." But what needs to be explored is the connection between this emphatic dark note in his poetry and the fact that Lorca, in Stainton's words, "left the United States with renewed faith in his work . . . and a newfound enthusiasm for life." Stainton, as she often does, conveys this information in isolation, instead of embedding it in evidence from Lorca's life or in a convincing interpretation, and then, almost mechanically, moves on.

Lorca may have been depressed in New York, but much more significant is the mastery of his wrenching poems in "Poet in New York." Such vertiginous introspection in art requires supreme inner poise. The paradoxical relationship between Lorca's psychic harmony and his increasingly nimble expression of anguish on the page does much to explain how he used his encounter with American blacks in his poetry. In New York, the Andalusian-born poet, who proudly claimed both Gypsy blood and Jewish blood, developed an almost fanatical, occasionally comic, and sometimes arrogantly condescending attraction to Harlem, and to the cause of black enfranchisement. Stainton writes, "Appalled by newspaper ads promoting powders to lighten black skin and pomades to flatten black hair, Lorca criticized those African Americans who would deny their race, and he rashly called for black violence to counter the cruelty of white America. One day, he wrote, black America will crush its oppressor, and blood 'will flow / on rooftops everywhere, / and burn the blond women's chlorophyll.' "

But Lorca wrote these lines, and other verses portraying American blacks as helpless and their situation as hopeless, during the Harlem Renaissance—a uniquely hopeful moment in black life in America. There is a case to be made for reading the vision of human misery in "Poet in New York" not as a projection of Lorca's inner state but, rather, as an ecstatic celebration of his new artistic strength. With his extreme depictions of the African-American "other," and of the infernal American city, Lorca had, perhaps, contrived a way to normalize his own suffering.

LORCA'S groundbreaking biographer was the Irish scholar Ian Gibson, who set to work on Lorca's life just three years after Franco's death, and thus three years into Spain's rapidly emerging democracy. The political context obviously spurred Gibson to create something more than a biography, and he ended up producing a sprawling, dense, fascinating study of Spanish society and politics. Though Gibson's book remains the definitive work on Lorca, Stainton has done more to emphasize the man rather than his context. Unlike Gibson, however, she takes no interpretive chances.

Consider these lines from Lorca's magnificent elegy for his beloved friend Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, a famous bullfighter who, having just made a comeback after years of retirement (he needed the money), was mortally wounded in the ring:

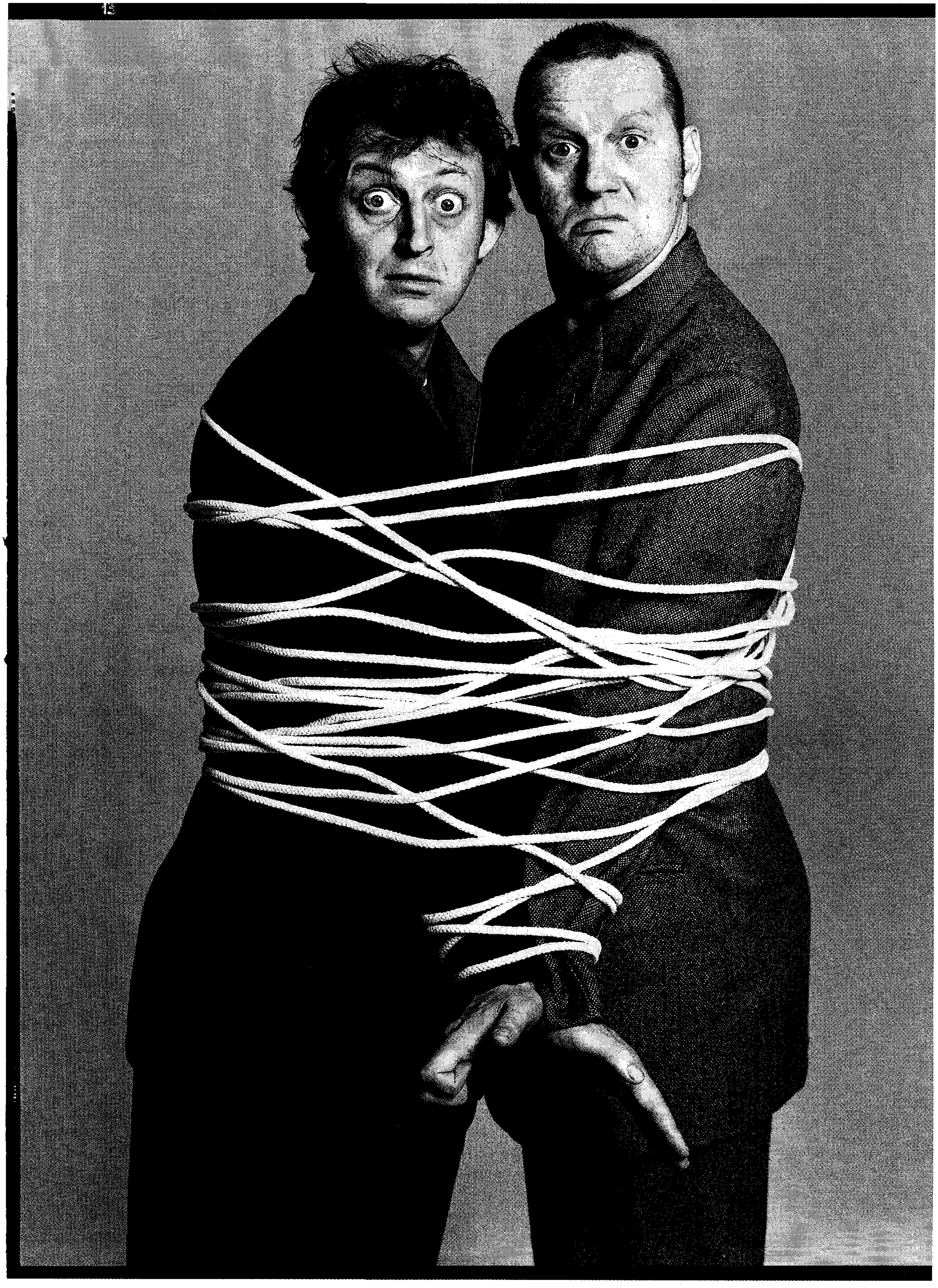
> I do not want to see it!
>
> Tell that to the moon when it comes,
> that I do not want to see the blood
> of Ignacio all over the arena.
>
> I do not want to see it!
>
> The wide-open moon,
> tranquil horse-clouds,
> and the gray bullring a dream
> with willows in its walls.
>
> I do not want to see it!

This is Lorca's reply to the straight machismo that spurned his gay machismo, and it is all the more meaningful because Ignacio loved men as well as women. Gibson relates this fact about Ignacio's private life. Oddly, Stainton, who elsewhere writes of Lorca's homosexuality with sensitivity and insight, neglects to mention it. Yet to know how Lorca configured a destiny for himself in his art, you first have to see the pattern that his sexuality imposed on his life. "Ode to Walt Whit-

COMIC GOODS

Hamish McColl is the bug-eyed one, and Sean Foley has the hangdog puss; together they go by the moniker The Right Size. Their distinctive Olivier Award-winning act, "Do You Come Here Often?" (starting this week at P.S. 122), brings together slapstick and character comedy while asking the age-old question "What happens to two people locked together in a bathroom for twenty-five years?" In the case of these two, they pass the time in hilarious conflict and fantasy. "Hamish's character is pretentious, snobbish, and definitely thinks he knows more than me," Foley says. "I'm the idiot." But both comedians are smart enough to deftly combine outrageous behavior with the surreal.

Photograph by Richard Avedon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man," for instance, composed for "Poet in New York," is a furious diatribe against the "*maricas*," the "faggots" of the world, "murderers of doves," who "give boys / drops of filthy death with bitter poison," counterpoised by a paean to an idealized Whitman, possessed of "virile beauty," with "thighs as virgin-pure as Apollo's." Stainton takes the straightforward psychological approach and regards the ugly lines as embodying Lorca's anxiety about his effeminacy. But it seems just as plausible that they express the crude beginnings of Lorca's vision of an escape from desire itself.

Lorca is, indeed, a poet of desire, but he is, ultimately, the poet of an intense yearning to be free from desire. His tragedies, though conventionally read as attacks on sexual repression, are more truly protests against the condition of sexual longing. For Lorca was Spain's last great Catholic poet, though his Catholicism was soaked in Surrealism. He honors the poet who "gives up dreaming and gives up desiring. He no longer desires. He loves." The aspiration toward love beyond desire is Lorca's reply to the Surrealists' worship of desire, and the spiritual stillness that he sought approached a kind of oblivion.

In high modernist style, Lorca fashioned a theory as a pedestal for his art: death as the embarkation point of creation; an inner, self-obliterating frenzy as the source of poetic inspiration. He exalted "duende," which in Spanish folklore is a goblin energy demonically allied with death. Many people have been misled by his famous analogy between the artist's duende and the bullfighter's. Lorca was not celebrating the bullfight or adoring death; he was subtly undermining the toreador and asserting in his place the creative virility of a certain homosexual poet, who was occasionally vexed by his own effeminacy. "The duende wounds," Lorca wrote. "In the healing of that wound, which never closes, lie the strange, invented qualities of a man's work." It is the healing that has the highest value for Lorca, and not the destruction caused by the wound. The most viciously homophobic newspaper in Spain, which agitated for the arrest of *los ambiguos,* was in fact called *El Duende.* Death was its muse. With his idea of duende, Lorca turned the cruelty he hated in Spanish society and culture—and which lay nascent within himself—on its head.

ONE of the secrets of Lorca's poetry lies in his use of the word *cosa,* "thing." It is the way he colonizes the realm of extinction. Here are excerpts from three phases of his brief career:

> Guitar begins
> weeping . . .
> Impossible to
> silence.
> It weeps for distant things.
> ("The Guitar")
>
> Under the gypsy moon
> things are looking at her
> and she cannot see them.
> ("Sleepwalker's Ballad")
>
> I want to cry because I have the urge
> to cry,
> the way children in the last row cry,
> because I am not a man, or a poet,
> or a leaf,
> but a wounded pulse that patrols and
> serenades and hangs waiting for
> the things of the other side.
> ("Double Poem of Lake Eden")

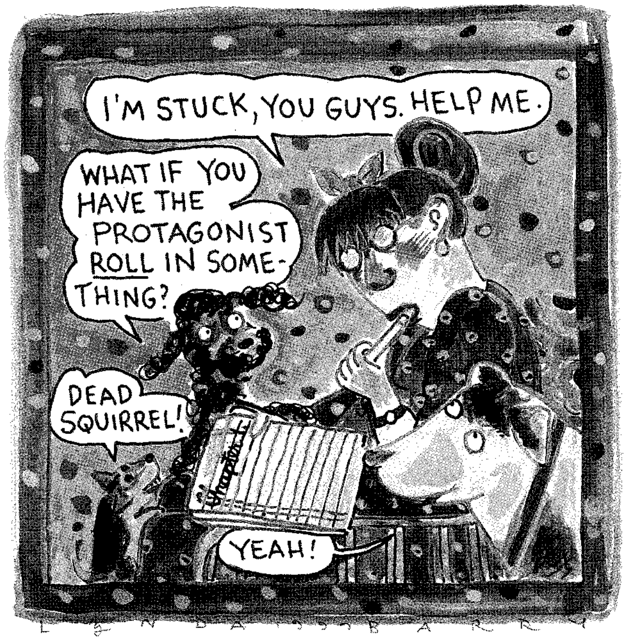
"Distant things," invisible things, "the things of the other side": into the arena of death Lorca imports this world's precious palpability. He confers eternity on finitude just as he humanizes infinity. This cunning transubstantiation, contrary to the vision cherished by the acolytes of his martyrdom, is the only kind of death Lorca ever desired. ♦

BAD TRIP

A father-daughter massacre.

BY A. O. SCOTT

LYNDA BARRY is best known as the creator of "Ernie Pook's Comeek," a comic strip that has run for twenty years in alternative weekly newspapers across the country. The strip is devoted principally to two sisters, Marlys and Maybonne, who face the usual travails of American girlhood and adolescence—acne, unpopularity, the queasy advent of sexual curiosity—in a brutally dysfunctional working-class home. (If you aren't familiar with their saga, imagine a collaboration between Roz Chast and Joyce Carol Oates.) Over the years, Barry has published several collections of her strip. The newest of these, "The Freddie Stories" (Sasquatch Books; $12.95), relates a year in the life of Marlys and Maybonne's younger brother, Freddie, who, as Marlys tactfully puts it, "has certain mental disorders known as emotional problems." Marlys also turns up on the back cover of the book with a consumer advisory. "If a very realistic story about an unusual boy could make you nervous," she says, wringing her crudely drawn, strangely speckled hands, "you should probably not read this."


I'M STUCK, YOU GUYS. HELP ME.
WHAT IF YOU HAVE THE PROTAGONIST ROLL IN SOME-THING?
DEAD SQUIRREL!
YEAH!
LYNDA BARRY

With some modification, Marlys's disclaimer could just as well be applied to "Cruddy" (Simon & Schuster; $23), Barry's first novel for grown-ups. ("The Good Times Are Killing Me," her foray into young-adult fiction, appeared in 1988.) This is not a story for the faint of heart. "Cruddy" is "Ernie Pook's Comeek" carried out by other means—in an obvious sense less graphic but in another sense a good deal more so. It stars an extended family of "knife people"—former owners of a mom-and-pop slaughterhouse who were forced out of business by the big meat-packing companies of the Midwest and by the tyranny of the U.S.D.A. (which, according to one family member, stands for "You Stupid Dumb Ass"). Knives, they like to say, are in their blood, and, as if to prove it, they use their knives—which they give cute names like Sheila and Little Debbie—on one another.

Our narrator is sixteen-year-old Roberta Rohbeson, who lives with her younger sister and their embittered mother (known as "the mother") at the edge of an illegal garbage dump:

> East Crawford is a road of trash people. Teeth missing and greasy two-color hair on the women and regular greasy hair on the men and all of the people come in two sizes only, very fat or very skinny. And all of them are hacking and all of them are huffing on cigs constantly. I smoke too at times. So does Julie. It is very hard not to smoke here.

Roberta's story is ambiguously poised between two exemplary adolescent genres—the bildungsroman and the suicide note. "The author very badly wants to get to the question of why," Roberta declares near the beginning. "The burning question of why she turned out the way she did and why she ended the way she ended. Ask a burning question, get a burning answer." Whether we get an answer is debatable, but what follows is certainly incendiary. The novel switches back and forth between two especially eventful periods in Roberta's young life. The framing story chronicles a hectic few days of sexual exploration and hallucinogen-gobbling in 1971, during which Roberta tells her new friends—a group of druggy outcasts like herself—about a road trip she took with her father (known as "the father") a few years earlier. Their trip ended in what Roberta aptly calls the Lucky Chief Motel Massacre, of which she was the partial perpetrator and the sole human survivor. Her later adventures, which lead to a quixotic, drug-fuelled attempt to return to the scene of some of the father's many crimes and retrieve the suitcases full of money that inspired them, end just as badly: "The police kept sticking their freaky heads in close to the author's face and their breath was quite squidly and they kept saying, 'Where did you get the substance, Roberta, who gave you the substance, Rob-

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BRIEFLY NOTED

Schrödinger's Baby, by H. R. McGregor (Morrow; $22). Eighteen-year-old Juliet Porteus leaves home to attend veterinary school in Glasgow, but her studies are quickly derailed when she adopts the slacker hedonism of her scruffy flatmates. She tells the story of her love affair with one of them, an aspiring actress named Kerry, whose lies, promiscuity, and increasing instability lead Juliet on a quest to untangle a skein of lurid secrets. Less concerned with plotting a clever mystery than with representing the psychological dynamic between the charismatic Kerry and the scientific Juliet, McGregor is most moving when she shows how the theories and idealism of youth are poor defenses against the chaos of real life.

The Things We Used to Say, by Natalia Ginzburg; translated from the Italian by Judith Woolf (Arcade; $23.95). This brilliant family memoir, first published in 1963, when it won the Premio Strego, Italy's equivalent of the Pulitzer, appears here with a helpful introduction by the translator, who has also supplied footnotes. Ginzburg intended her book to be read as a novel, but every description—whether it's an uproarious glimpse of her bellicose father, the scientist Giuseppe Levi, at an academic cocktail party or an account of the postwar suicide of her close friend Cesare Pavese—has the unmistakable feel of intimate recollection.

The Nanny and the Iceberg, by Ariel Dorfman (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $25). In 1967, three Chilean men make a bet about the next twenty-five years: Cristóbal will sleep with a new woman every night; Pablo Barón will become the power behind his country's throne; and Francisco will see a successful socialist revolution. These crazy bets indelibly mark Cristóbal's son, Gabriel, who spends those years exiled in New York and inhibited by the towering image of his absent father's virility; he finally returns to Chile, hoping to discover the skills that will spring him from his sexual prison. Gabriel introduces his rollicking story as the "longest suicide note in history," and his ironic deadpan never lets up until the stabbing poignancy of the novel's finish.

A People's History of the Supreme Court, by Peter Irons (Viking; $32.95). Written for the nonspecialist, this account emphasizes the individuals whose fates made constitutional history, and the effect of the Court's decisions on the lives of ordinary people. Irons is an activist: he set in motion the suits that, in the eighties, reversed the convictions of three Japanese-Americans who had violated wartime restrictions, and he earlier served a prison term for refusing induction during the Vietnam War. He is sometimes preachy, and very occasionally tendentious, but for the most part his presentation of the Court's opinions reliably reflects contemporary consensus.

Dennis Potter: A Biography, by Humphrey Carpenter (St. Martin's; $40). Potter was a coal miner's son from the Forest of Dean whose teleplays for the BBC—most notably his 1986 masterpiece, "The Singing Detective"—brought a jarring "non-naturalism" to television. Carpenter's biographical approach can be overinclusive, but it is also modest and astute. He intercuts long synopses and excerpts with glimpses of the writer's life, including the painful course of Potter's chronic psoriatic arthropathy and (encoded in the confessions of his characters) a running count of the prostitutes he visited. The effect is to let the reader see "the constant, disturbing overlap between what he wrote and what he was."

Why Read the Classics?, by Italo Calvino; translated from the Italian by Martin McLaughlin (Pantheon; $26). Calvino answers the title question with a general essay providing fourteen lovely definitions of a classic—many of which seem to contradict and complement each other at once. Then he offers thirty-five specific answers from his own library: extraordinarily flexible and delighted readings of Homer and Xenophon and Dickens and Balzac and Queneau and Montale which will likely send you off to (re)read the classics being discussed and then summon you back again.

God's Funeral, by A. N. Wilson (Norton; $27.95). In the poem from which Wilson takes his title, Thomas Hardy imagines "a slowly-stepping train" of figures bearing "a strange and mystic form." The form is God, borne on a bier to his interment. Wilson's book is a study of the nineteenth-century men and women who were, if not God's murderers or pallbearers, interested witnesses of his demise. Carlyle, George Eliot, Ruskin, Marx, Swinburne—the author reinvents these and many others for the modern reader, sometimes evenhandedly and often with a sardonic sense of mockery. The questions raised by the Victorians are the grand ones of life, and from them Wilson has made an enjoyable book of first-class intellectual gossip.

The Vandals, by Alan Michael Parker (BOA Editions; $12.50). These interconnected poems chart the course of an anonymous group of America's anybodies: restive, irreverent, and bright, "Proud to be the nuisance it's a vandal's / Job to be." At times surreal, at others plainspoken, the poems evoke life's variety: in one, the vandals pull up next to a gang of "Philistines" on the turnpike; in another, they witness a foal's bloody birth. Parker suggests that the vandals' qualities are not unlike those of poetry itself, which is continually in search of something new; his musical and witty poems respond eloquently to that desire.

erta, where did you get it, the substance, Roberta.' "

It is hard to discuss the plot of "Cruddy" without making it sound like some mid-nineteen-nineties Tarantino-inspired film-school project run amok. There is a great deal of extreme, hilarious—you might say cartoonish—violence: throats are cut, corpses are dismembered, a dead man's penis falls out of a liquor bottle. But Roberta herself is too substantial to be a caricature. Like Marlys and Maybonne—or, for that matter, like Huckleberry Finn—she possesses an unforgettable, seamlessly imagined voice. Her cadences and solecisms, her stutterings and epiphanies, are meant to show not how someone's idea of a child would think and talk but, rather, how this specific child does.

Because Roberta's voice is so vivid and immediate, her escapades become strangely believable. Few readers (one would hope) have had experiences like Roberta's: running roadblocks with a hard-drinking, serial-killing father; settling down at a remote desert abattoir run by a pedophilic sheriff; being forced to pass for a mute, epileptic "mongolian idiot" (and a boy); hunting down a deranged transvestite cousin in a cave near a nuclear-weapons testing facility; making sock monkeys for charity in the Las Vegas Christian Homes. "Cruddy" will supply you not only with an indelible sense of what such experiences would feel like to a homely, sensitive teen-ager but also with useful tips on what to do if anything similar should happen to you. Roberta's father is, along with everything else, a Navy man—"Navy all the way, Clyde. Every goddamned inch right down to the end of my pecker"—and when he's not trying to kill Roberta or anyone else, or out of his mind on Old Skull Popper, he's filling her ear with practical wisdom, which she thoughtfully passes on. (If you ever need to derail a train, consult page 166.)

A key piece of the father's Navy lore involves a concept called "dazzle camouflage," which Roberta applies to various actions and events, and explains in various ways, such as "It was the Navy that figured out that you could paint something with confusions so horror-bright that the eyeballs would get upset to where they refused to see." Or, less theoretically, "Shooting a woman's arm off with a hunting rifle was a form of dazzle camouflage if what you were camouflaging were the slits in the jugular and the carotid." The best example I can think of is "Cruddy" tself, whose horror-bright narrative of over-the-top mayhem and Grand Guignol comedy nearly blinds you to its plain, heartbreaking realism. The story blows up in your face so many times that you don't feel it going for the jugular. If that makes you nervous, you probably should not read this. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

DOG DAYS

Danish revolutionaries and new talents, and Albert Brooks entrapped.

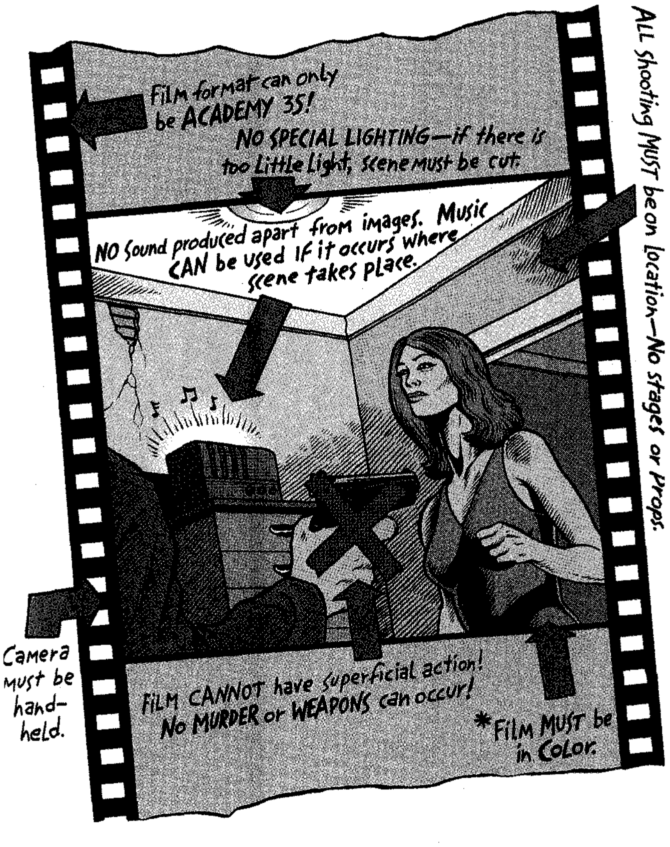
BY DAVID DENBY

SIGNING an oath of purity in the movie business is rather like playing a Mozart quartet in a whorehouse. Four and a half years ago, a small group of Danish filmmakers calling themselves Dogma '95 issued a manifesto, a "vow of chastity." The Danes set up ten bristling rules in which they rejected such assaults on their integrity as props, tripods, constructed sets, "special" (i.e., electric) lighting, filters, and any other heightening of a scene or an image. When I heard about the "vow," with its sackcloth aesthetics ("The camera must be hand-held . . . the film must not contain superficial action"), I assumed it was just an impotent protest—a way of thumbing one's nose at Hollywood. Not that I failed to understand the Danes' disgust: Hollywood, despite some recent belt-tightening, is more appallingly sinful than the medieval church, and Dogma 95, by denying itself Hollywood's indulgences, is reacting against the same things that filmmakers all over the world are reacting against—excess and waste and flashy, meaningless movies with "brilliant" imagery that just whirls by. And yet, upon reading the manifesto, one had serious doubts. Of what possible use is chastity in an art form that is radically impure to begin with? The Dogma signers, it turns out, went far beyond rejecting lousy movies and computer-generated imagery. They appeared to be taking a stand against illusion itself. They insisted on location shooting, and they forbade the use of music unless it "occurred where the scene is shot." They outlawed genre films and historical re-creation. They banned artifice in a medium in which all expression depends on artifice of one sort or another. The manifesto seemed naïve or disingenuous—a kind of perverse Lutheran publicity stunt, in which austerity was praised as ostentatiously as possible.

An idea, however, doesn't have to be intellectually coherent in order to attract followers. Naïve or not, Dogma '95 has become something of a force in the film world. At least fifteen filmmakers have now embraced Dogmatic principles, and they include not just prominent and award-winning Danish directors like Lars von Trier ("Breaking the Waves") and Thomas Vinterberg ("The Celebration") but also some Americans working outside the mainstream: Paul Morrissey, who was making minimalist, or pre-Dogma, movies for Andy Warhol thirty years ago; and the young punk-auteur Harmony Korine, whose scuzzball atrocity "Gummo" caused a tiny ripple in 1997. Is it possible that Dogma has become less a new cause than a new hustle? By signing on, a director earns the right to display, at the beginning of his film, a kind of Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval: "This is to certify the following motion picture has been produced in compliance with the rules and intentions set forth in the Dogma '95 manifesto." No piece of poultry ever received a more high-toned blessing.

The international art cinema is particularly weak at the moment, and Dogma '95 at least gives film-festival programmers and young directors something to buzz about and define themselves by. In recognition of the Danish presence, the Lincoln Center Film Society, in association with the Danish Film Institute, is putting on a festival from the tenth to the nineteenth of September called "Heart of Light: The Danish Wave in Cinema." The festival is an attempt to offer a wide range of Danish movies, and two of the best films in it—Nicolas Winding Refn's "Bleeder," and Øle Christian Madsen's "Pizza King"—aren't part of the Dogma movement. Still, the festival probably wouldn't have existed at all without the Dogma provocation, and "Breaking the Waves" and "The Celebration" are inevitably present on the program.

As I sampled the films, and appreciated the Danish achievement, I was


Film format can only be ACADEMY 35!
NO SPECIAL LIGHTING—if there is too Little Light, scene must be cut.
NO Sound produced apart from images. Music CAN be used if it occurs where scene takes place.
ALL Shooting MUST be on location—No stages or Props.
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FILM CANNOT have superficial action! No MURDER or WEAPONS can occur!
*FILM MUST be in Color.

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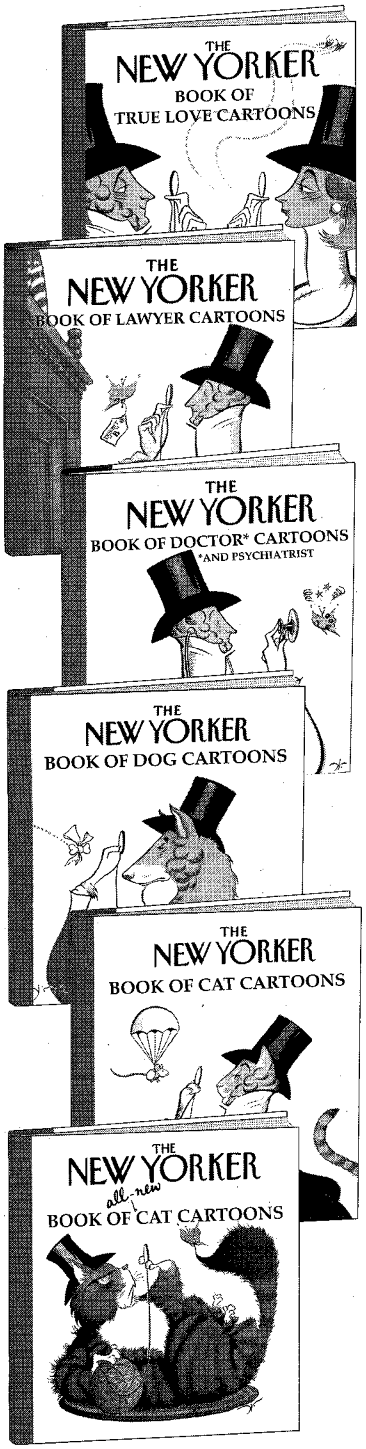
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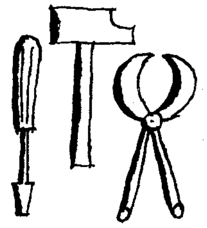
startled by a connection with what's happening in America. Consider the success of "The Blair Witch Project" this summer. Was it not made—unintentionally, I assume—in general conformity with the Dogma principles? "Blair Witch," with its handheld camera, its absence of music, its scarred, even tormented, surface, is trying to give the audience a new, all-encompassing experience. If you look at "Blair Witch" closely, you can see that it was very shrewdly put together—that its existential realism is itself an artifice of considerable skill. But let us not deconstruct the movie. Let us take it as a rough-hewn romantic gesture and a possible watershed moment in which the young audience, so indifferent to most American independent films, begins to turn its back on routine Hollywood "product."

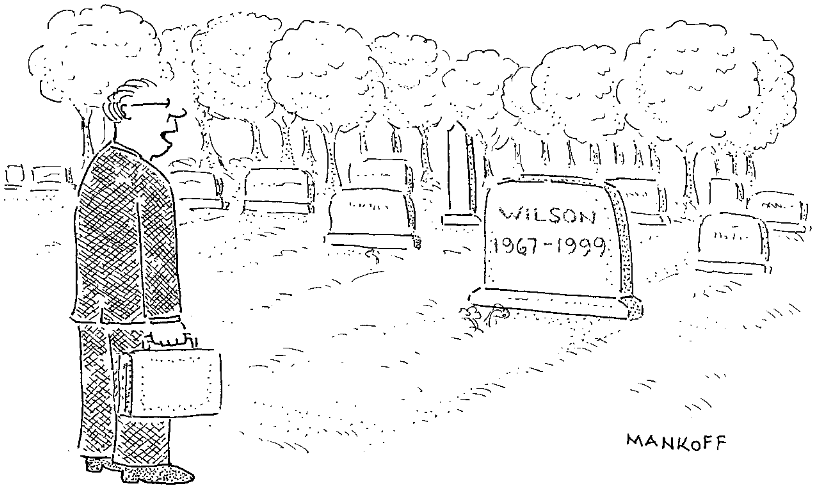
With Dogma and "Blair Witch" before us, we appear to be in the presence of a modest Cultural Moment. What produced it? Thomas Vinterberg has spoken of "my attempt to undress film, to reach the 'naked film,' " and an anonymous propagandist on the Dogma Web site has stated, "Today a technological storm is raging, the result of which will be the ultimate democratization of the cinema. For the first time, anyone can make movies." The "storm" in question has been whipped up by the new digital technologies, especially the lightweight video cameras, which significantly reduce the cost and physical labor of filmmaking. (Parts of "Blair Witch" and all of "The Celebration" were shot on video.) So it's precisely the development of a new technology which calls forth anti-technology sentiment and a possible worldwide surge in "naked" filmmaking. The paradox, and the rhetoric accompanying it, are reminiscent of what happened in the sixties, when the introduction of lightweight film-camera and sound-recording equipment produced similar utopian hopes. Suddenly, the New Wave directors, especially Jean-Luc Godard, were able to make movies quickly and easily—almost as if filmmaking were something you could just run out and do with a group of friends. And the newly mobile documentary filmmakers, working in cinéma-vérité style, hoped to create magic just by entering a situation as it unfolded.



The two best-known Dogma directors, von Trier and Vinterberg, want a grittier image and denser, more complex emc tions than Hollywood can possibly offe They push their films over the edge int extremes of anger, anguish, joy. But ho much are they really setting themselve against the current commercial practice In "Breaking the Waves," von Trier con structed flatly unbelievable characters an situations and then tried to make them au thentic by shoving the camera into Emil Watson's face as she pulled one emotio after another out of her gut. And in "Th Celebration," which is about a big famil going berserk at a reunion, Thomas Vin terberg slung his little video camer around as if it were a baseball glove. Th camera was so mobile that whatever recorded—a family fight, a couple forni cating on a bed, a drunken rant—felt in substantial. The movie was overwrough and glib, and visually it wasn't that fa from a standard MTV freak-out. If th problem of nineties film aesthetics is th the image has lost its power and emc tional weight, then Dogma may not b any kind of solution. To my eyes, thes movies share a kind of frantic restlessnes that is more doggy than Dogmatic.

The danger of the new portable cam eras is that the only storm they wi release is a hurricane of blurry, junky looking, "spontaneous" scenes of little c no interest. Perhaps we should reca what happened in the last revolution: th directors who tried to make films the wa Godard and Frederick Wiseman mad them, but didn't have the disci pline and brilliance of Godar or Wiseman, wound up pro ducing boredom and incoher ence. I love "Blair Witch, but I'd hate to see an army c Sony-equipped children lungin around the woods, streets, an bedrooms in search of that old "Blair magic. Artifice and elegance, and eve electric lights, are not the enemies c movie art, and austerity is less a mor choice than a style that either works for director or doesn't.

In the festival, the non-Dogmati "Bleeder," which is about the violenc that erupts into the stagnant lives o some video-store hangers-on, conveys powerful malaise by remarkably conven tional means. Refn sets up a small grou of men who gather regularly at an apart ment for a shared dose of nihilistic movi schlock. "Bleeder" offers some of th familiar forms of urban alienation an



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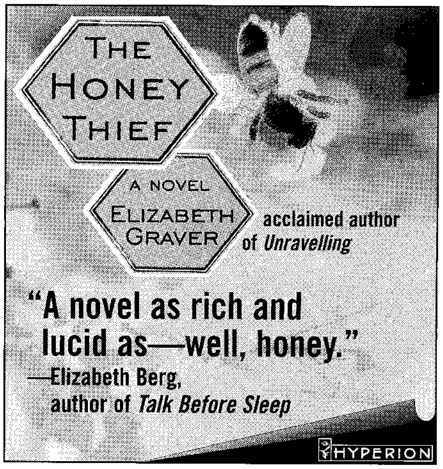
ental sluggishness, but with this disrbing suggestion—that passivity may e preferable to the alternative. The ero's girlfriend gets pregnant, and the reat of impending new life sends him rifting inexorably toward the kind of lowout he knows from the movies. Refn orks in bright, clear colors and uses a ll CinemaScope frame, and Øle Chrisan Madsen, another non-Dogmatist d the director of the exciting "Pizza ing," shoots at night and in murky staurants, just like his obvious master, Iartin Scorsese. Madsen has terrific nartive skills. His characters are desperate oung Pakistani men—the children of nmigrants in Copenhagen—who are orn between crime and respectility. When they aren't out on the reets hustling or stealing, the men tell ories to one another. The stories are suerb, but we wouldn't enjoy them half so uch if the tellers' bright eyes hadn't been perfectly lit. Art may not be possible ithout violating every one of the Dogna principles. Neither "Bleeder" nor "Pizza ing" has an American distributor, but they should get one, they will face merican viewers as first-rate movies, ot as testimonials to the director's virtue.

As a comic creator, Albert Brooks has recently displayed an excruciating eakness: he sets up a workable satiric lea for his movies ("Defending Your ife" and "Mother") and then repeats it ver and over until the audience is ready scream. Brooks writes, directs, and ars, and he traps his own character—a hiny, edgy complainer—in his monomania. In his latest, "The Muse," Brooks plays a big-time Hollywood screenwriter, Steven Phillips, who has lost his mojo. Dead all over town, Phillips has no recourse but to apply for help from a daughter of Zeus, a Muse (Sharon Stone), who supplies established writers and directors with inspiration and suggestions. The Muse, however, turns out to be a demanding broad who wants to be showered with gifts and luxuries, and who finally moves in on the screenwriter and displaces him from his own bed. In this elaborate conceit, there is potentially a good spoof of the fickleness of Hollywood success, which seems at times to operate by mystique or by chance, but Brooks doesn't find the momentum or the bite in the idea. And how can a man without a will of his own serve as the hero of a movie? Steve Phillips is a miserable sad sack, and we shrink from his haplessness and self-pity. Even Phillips's Muse is second-rate. The allegedly brilliant movie idea that she leads him to—something about a whale in an aquarium—is the worst thing I've ever heard. Is her banality part of the joke? It's impossible to tell, since Brooks appears to be stuck in the Hollywood prison he complains about. It's time for him to spring himself from his cell and make movies a different way (and I don't mean he should put on a hair shirt and join the Dogmatists). A low-budget comedy with a daring script and nifty direction by Albert Brooks could cause a sensation. But to pull it off he'd have to have lots of good ideas, not just a single notion repeated unto death. ♦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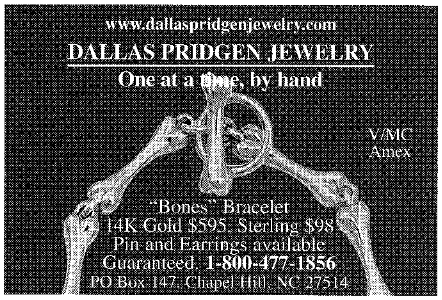
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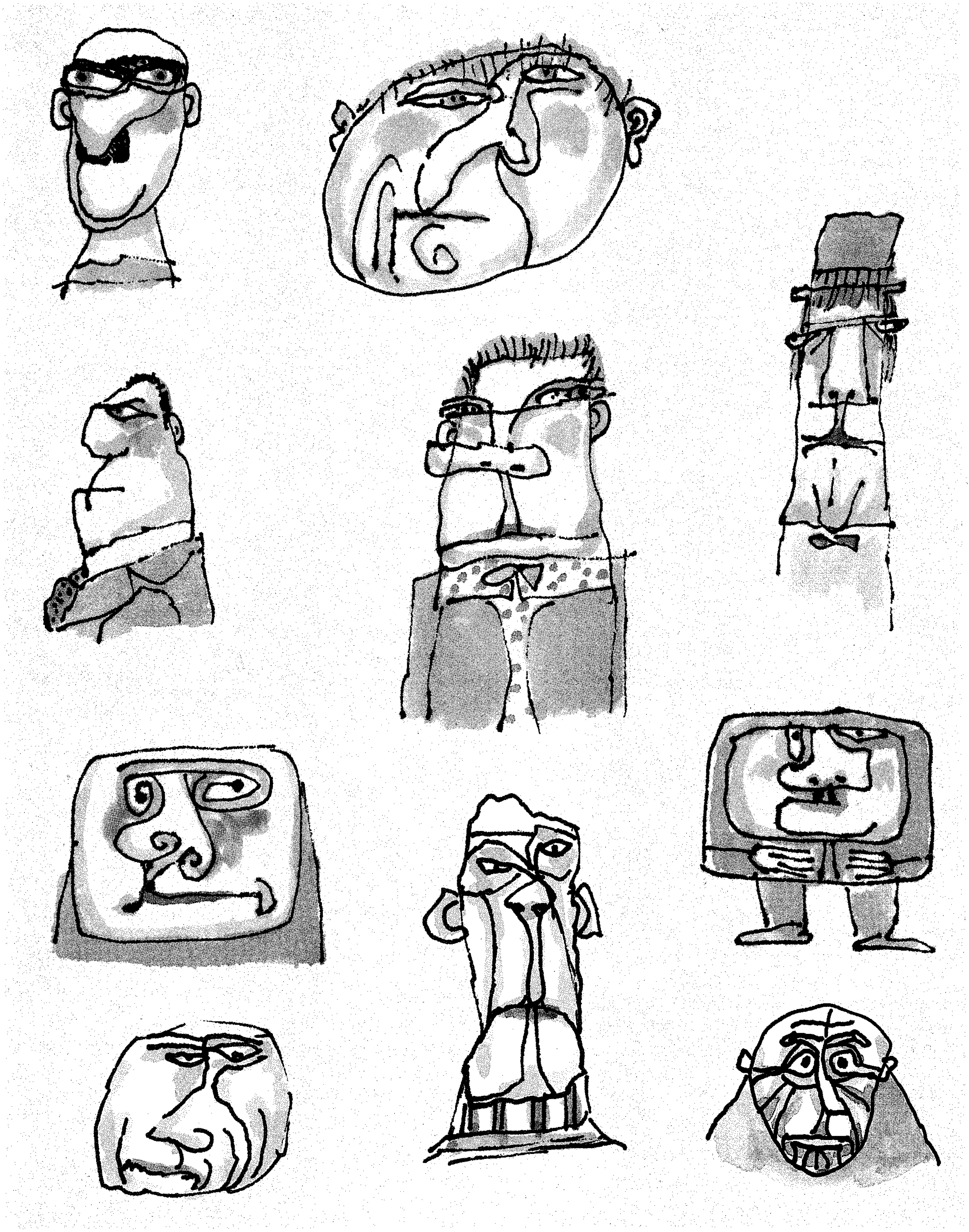

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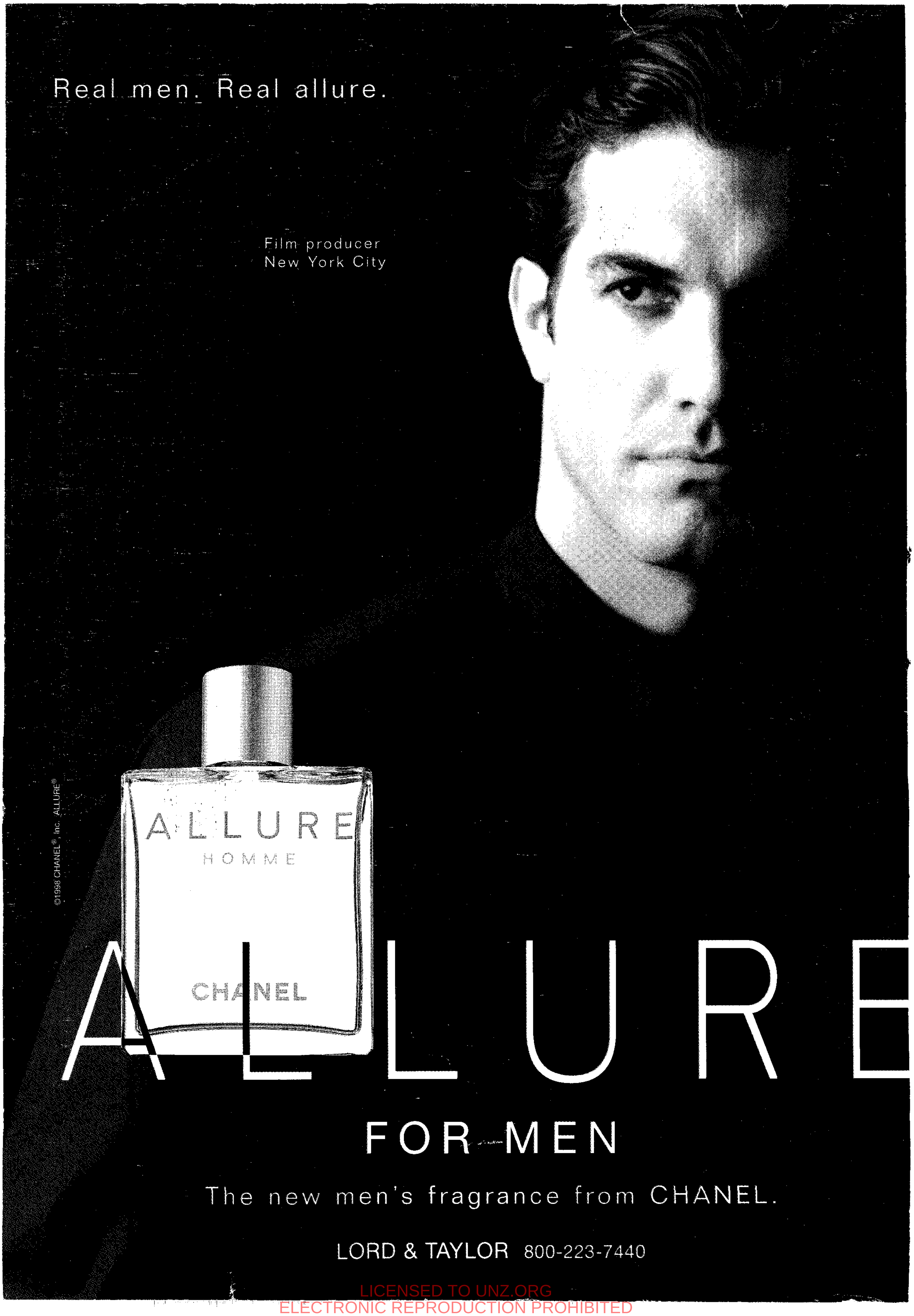
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